

# The Images of Space in the Third Sibylline Oracle

DISSERTATION

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Dr. theol.

Eingereicht am: 17.06.2011

der Theologischen Fakultät der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin von

Deborah Jacobs

Präsident/Präsidentin der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Prof. Dr. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz

Dekan/Dekanin der Theologischen Fakultät

Prof. Dr. Jens Schröter

Gutachter/Gutachterinnen:

1. Prof. Dr. Cilliers Breytenbach
2. PD Dr. Christiane Zimmermann
3. Prof. Dr. Markus Witte

Tag der Disputation: 05.12.2012

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	PART I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1	Preliminary questions .....	1
1.1.1	The Sibyl and apocalypticism.....	1
1.1.2	The character of the Sibyl.....	2
1.2	The Jewish and Christian Sibylline Oracles.....	4
1.2.1	The transmission of Sibylline Fragments by Christian authors.....	4
1.2.2	The Sibyl as a Jewish pseudepigraph .....	4
1.2.3	The beginning of the Third Sibylline Oracle.....	5
1.3	History of research .....	5
1.3.1	Early scholarship and the Sibylline Oracles .....	6
1.3.2	The 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries.....	6
1.3.3	The Third Sibylline Oracle .....	7
1.3.4	Recent Scholarship .....	9
1.3.5	The date of the Third Sibyl: The seventh king, the king from the sun/east.....	16
1.4	Structure of the Third Sibylline Oracle .....	20
	Excursus: The anti-Roman oracle in lines 350-380 .....	21
1.5	Spatial theories and biblical scholarship .....	29
1.5.1	Images of Space.....	29
1.5.2	Soja's Thirdspace and Foucault's Heterotopia.....	29
1.5.3	Space in the Third Sibyl .....	33
1.5.4	The vertical and horizontal lines in the Third Sibyl .....	36
1.6	Utopias in classical and biblical texts.....	39
1.6.1	Introduction .....	39
1.6.2	Classical and Hellenistic Utopias .....	40
1.6.3	Utopias in biblical texts .....	42
	PART II: COMMENTARY.....	45
2	SECTION I: LINES 93-161 .....	45
2.1	Introduction .....	45
2.1.1	Structure.....	45
2.1.2	Primeval history – the horizontal and vertical lines .....	45
2.2	Fragmentary passage (93-96).....	46
2.3	The Tower of Babel (97-107).....	47
2.4	The Titanomachy and the tripartite division of the world (108-158a).....	53
	Excursus The Euhemerism .....	53
2.4.1	The Titan dominion and the Titanomachy (108-113) .....	54
2.4.2	The tripartite division of the earth and the beginning of divided kingdoms .....	58
	Excursus: The Sibyl and the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 and Jubilees 8-9.....	61
2.5	Conclusion: The relativisation of dominion in the past (156-158a).....	66
2.6	The World Empires: the beginning universal history (158b-161) .....	67
	Excursus: The development of the empire scheme.....	70
2.7	The empires and the Table of Nations tradition .....	73
3	SECTION II: LINES 162-195 .....	76
3.1	Introduction .....	76
3.2	Structure .....	77
3.3	The introduction formula (lines 162-166).....	77
	Excursus: Ex eventu prophecy and the point of view of the Sibyl .....	80
3.4	How many kingdoms of men will arise: The house of Solomon (167-170).....	81

3.5	The map of the Sibyl and the Table of Nations tradition .....	87
3.6	The assessment of the Empires .....	88
3.7	The Macedonian Empire (171-174) .....	90
3.8	The kingdom from the western sea (175-191) .....	93
3.9	The seventh king of Egypt and the role of the people of God (192-195).....	102
3.10	Conclusion: the relativisation of dominion of the past.....	106
4	SECTION III: LINES 196-294.....	108
4.1	Introduction .....	108
4.1.1	Structure.....	108
4.1.2	Introduction of a new prophecy (196-198).....	108
4.2	Oracles against various nations (199-212a) .....	109
4.3	The Macedonians as descendants of the Titans.....	110
4.3.1	Oracles against the pious men who live around the temple (212b-217) .....	113
4.3.2	The righteous people from Ur of the Chaldeans (218-219).....	114
	Excursus: The Jews as originators of the Chaldean sciences .....	115
4.4	Things that lead astray: the law as the way of God (220-233).....	117
4.5	The law is righteousness and virtue (234-247) .....	119
4.6	The history of the pious (248-294).....	122
4.6.1	The Exodus narrative (248-264).....	122
4.6.2	Exile and restoration of the people of God (265-294).....	126
4.6.3	God will send a king from heaven to avail his people (286-294).....	130
4.7	Conclusion.....	132
5	SECTION IV: LINES 295-349.....	135
5.1	Introduction .....	135
5.2	Structure .....	136
5.3	A formula to introduce a new section (295-299) .....	136
5.4	Babylon is punished for destroying the temple (300-313).....	136
5.5	An oracle against Egypt in the seventh reign as a redactional addition (314-318) .....	142
5.6	Oracles against Gog and Magog, Libya (319-323) .....	143
5.7	The daughters of the west (324-333).....	146
	Excursus: The Sibyl and the use of biblical style .....	149
5.8	A comet as a harbinger of judgement in reference to Caesar (334-336).....	150
5.9	Conclusion: the four corners of the Earth .....	153
6	SECTION V: LINES 489-600 .....	154
6.1	Introduction .....	154
6.2	Structure .....	155
6.3	Introduction to a new prophecy (489-491).....	156
6.4	An oracle against the lawless Phoenicians (492-503).....	157
6.5	Universal judgement of the Most High (504-519).....	159
6.6	An oracle against Greece (520-40).....	161
6.7	Only a third of mankind will survive: the end of the tripartite division of the earth (541-44).....	162
6.8	First admonition of the Greeks (545-561).....	163
6.9	The race of impious men (562-572) .....	166
6.10	The race of the pious man (573-600) .....	167
7	SECTION VI: LINES 601-701.....	171
7.1	Introduction .....	171
7.2	Structure .....	171
7.3	Punishment of the idol worshippers (601-607).....	172
7.4	The seventh reign of Egypt and a king from Asia (608-623).....	174

7.4.1	The seventh reign of Egypt (608-610).....	174
7.4.2	The king from Asia (611-615).....	176
7.4.3	Mass conversion and foreshadows of the divine dominion, the dawn of the Golden Age (616-623).....	178
7.4.4	Historical allusions .....	179
	Excursus: The Cologne Papyrus .....	180
7.4.5	Conclusion .....	182
7.5	Second Admonition (624-634).....	183
7.6	Cataclysmic events (635-651).....	184
7.7	The king from the east (652-656).....	186
	Excursus: The Oracle of the Potter .....	187
7.8	The temple will be restored in the age of the king from the east (657-660a) .....	193
7.9	Völkersturm: The assault of the ἔθνη (660b-668).....	194
7.10	Judgement of the nations (669-679).....	196
7.11	Conclusion of the section (698-701).....	200
8	SECTION VII.....	201
8.1	Introduction .....	201
8.2	Structure .....	202
8.3	The sons of God live peacefully (702-709).....	202
8.3.1	Living around the temple (702-703).....	203
	Excursus: The sons of God in related literature.....	205
8.3.2	God is sovereign (704) .....	207
8.4	The conversion of the nations .....	208
8.4.1	The nations realise that God loves his people (710-713) .....	208
8.4.2	The islands and the cities - the ends of the earth.....	209
8.4.3	The isles of the nations in the LXX.....	210
8.5	The hymns of the penitent nations (714-731) .....	211
8.5.1	The first hymn of the penitent nations: Gifts for the temple and universal acceptance of the law (716-720) .....	211
8.5.2	The law and the temple.....	215
8.5.3	The law as the way of God (721-723) .....	216
8.5.4	The end of the first hymn (line 724).....	217
8.5.5	The second hymn of the penitent nations (725-731) .....	219
8.6	Third admonition of the Greeks (732-740) .....	222
8.7	A prediction of judgement (741-743).....	223
8.8	The Golden Age (744-757a).....	224
8.9	The common law (757b-761) .....	227
8.10	Fourth admonition (762-766).....	231
9	SECTION VIII: LINES 767-808 .....	233
9.1	Introduction .....	233
9.2	Structure .....	234
9.3	The <i>basilêion</i> (767-769).....	235
9.4	The lexicographical description of βασιλῆιον/ βασιλεία .....	236
9.5	The <i>basilêion</i> in the Sibyl.....	237
9.6	The <i>basilêion</i> and the human kingdoms.....	238
9.7	The perpetual <i>basilêion</i> .....	240
9.8	The universal <i>basilêion</i> .....	240
9.9	The gates of the blessed (769-771).....	241
9.10	Biblical analogies .....	241
9.11	Classic analogies .....	243
9.12	The gates of heaven in the Third Sibyl.....	244

9.13	Universal pilgrimage to the house of God (772-776).....	245
9.14	The way of God: preparing the divine dominion (777-779) .....	247
9.15	Eternal peace and righteous wealth (780-784) .....	249
9.16	The role of the pious: prophets who are judges and just kings (781-782) .....	250
9.17	Conclusion of the passage (784) .....	254
9.18	The dwelling of the creator in the maiden (785-787).....	254
	Excursus: God as creator (κτίστης).....	254
9.19	Pastoral peace and peace with the enemies (788-795) .....	260
9.20	The joining of the horizontal and vertical lines.....	261
9.21	The end of all things (796-808).....	261
9.22	The end of war at the hands of God who dwells in heaven.....	263
9.23	Conclusion: the manifestation of God's dominion on earth .....	264
10	EPILOGUE: THE WANDERING PROPHETESS (LINES 809-829).....	267
10.1	Introduction .....	267
10.2	The Sibyl as a prophetess (809-812) .....	267
10.3	The Erythraean Sibyl (813-814a) .....	268
10.4	The wandering Sibyl .....	270
10.5	The disbelieved prophetess (814b-818) .....	271
10.6	A relative of Noah (819-828) .....	272
	Excursus: The association of Noah's ark with Asia Minor .....	274
10.7	Conclusion of the Sibyl (829) .....	275
11	PART III: IMAGES OF SPACE .....	277
11.1	The divine dominion and Utopia in related literature .....	277
11.1.1	The book of Daniel .....	277
11.1.2	Wisdom of Solomon .....	280
11.1.3	Philo and the Golden Age.....	282
11.1.4	Sirach .....	284
11.2	The Law in the Third Sibyl .....	285
11.2.1	Introduction .....	285
11.2.2	The common law .....	286
11.2.3	The law and the temple: to 'live around the temple' as a spatial metaphor for living according to the law .....	295
11.2.4	The <i>basilêion</i> and the law: the divine constitution .....	297
11.2.5	The law as the way of God, a sapiential motif .....	297
11.2.6	The law as Utopia .....	298
11.3	God the great king who dwells in heaven .....	300
11.3.1	Introduction: The image of God in Sib. Or. 3 .....	300
11.3.2	The celestial God .....	301
11.3.3	The sovereign God and the imperial cult in the first century BCE and BC ....	305
11.3.4	The sole ruler (μόναρχος) .....	306
11.3.5	God as king (βασιλεύς).....	308
11.3.6	Conclusion .....	314
11.4	Conclusion: The Images of Space in the Third Sibylline Oracle .....	316
11.4.1	Locating the author and the addresses of the Third Sibyl .....	316
11.4.2	The image of the land .....	318
11.4.3	The image of the law: the utopian constitution .....	319
11.4.4	The origin and date of the Third Sibylline Oracle .....	319
11.4.5	The images of space in the Third Sibylline Oracle .....	319
	ABBREVIATIONS .....	I
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	II

# 1 Part I: Introduction

## 1.1 Preliminary questions

### 1.1.1 The Sibyl and apocalypticism

Like other Greek oracles, the Sibylline Oracles were written in Greek hexameters. Defining the genre of the Sibyl has been a matter of debate. In modern editions, the Sibylline Collection can usually be found among the Apocalypses.<sup>1</sup> This echoes the insecurity of scholars with regard to the Sibylline genre and the apocalyptic genre for that matter. Of the diverse opinions on apocalypticism as a genre the following definition by Collins should be taken as a starting point:

Apocalypticism is ‘... a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.’<sup>2</sup>

This general definition, which outlines but the common denominators of all literature to be filed under apocalypticism, shows that the Sibyl is not an apocalypse proper. 1. The Sibyl has no narrative framework. 2. Revelation is not mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, rather than that, the Sibyl receives her revelation directly from God. 3. Furthermore, the Sibyl does not give insights into a supernatural world but rather into the world as it will be transformed in the future. There is no journey through the heavens or into the divine sphere.

The only thing the Sibyl does have in common with apocalypticism according to Collins’ definition is the temporal eschatological outlook. The Sibyl does not envisage a supernatural world that is set apart from ours. She is looking towards a transformed reality, the world in its ideal utopian state.

A feature that is typical of apocalyptic texts is the veiled allusions to present events and characters by cloaking them in the guise of entities of the past. The book of Daniel, for instance, is set in Babylonia at the time of Nebuchadnezzar but in fact it was written during and deals with the reign of Antiochus IV. The book of Revelation constantly refers to Rome as Babylon. The Sibyl shares this feature with Daniel and Revelation.

Lightfoot has noted the Sibyl’s closeness to Enoch and suggested that the Jewish Sibyllists may have borrowed from the books of Enoch.<sup>3</sup> Both are granted with unnatural long life, they are primordial which gives them the power to predict events that predate the deluge, which they are associated with in different ways, and rather than dividing the world in Jews and

---

<sup>1</sup> Charlesworth, 1985; Merkel, 2003. Oegema, 1999, 336f.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, 1984b, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 70-77.

Gentiles they have a universal outlook. In many ways, however, the Sibyl seems to be closer to Daniel than to Enoch. Her interest in world empires and their succession may be drawn from Daniel although this was a common topos in the Hellenistic world, starting with Herodotus. In lines 162-195, the Sibyl claims that God commanded her ‘to prophecy over the entire earth’ (163f) and predicts ‘how many kingdoms of men will arise’ (166). This claim to universal history connects her closer with Daniel than with Enoch but it ends there, the Sibyl has no interest in angelic beings, the journey through the heavens, or the resurrection of the dead.<sup>4</sup> After all, ‘[t]he Sibylline Oracles constitute a distinct genre of literature in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity’<sup>5</sup> and should be treated as such.

### 1.1.2 The character of the Sibyl

The Sibyl was a legendary figure in the Greek and Roman world. Despite their popularity in the ancient world, only scattered examples of pagan Sibyls have been preserved.<sup>6</sup> The etymology of the name ‘Sibyl’ is obscure but it is generally accepted that it advanced from a single figure to a common noun.<sup>7</sup> The existence of a prophetess with a raging mouth going by the name Sibyl is suggested by a fragment of Heraclitus (ca. 500 BCE) preserved by Plutarch (ca. 50-120 CE).<sup>8</sup> We can also learn from Pausanias that the name Sibyl was first given to her by the Libyans (Africans).<sup>9</sup> In Aristophanes’ comedy *Equites* (424 BCE), he uses the made up verb σιβυλιάω (to “sibylise”) as a synonym for ἀείδω χρησμούς (to utter oracles).<sup>10</sup> In the comedy *Pax* (421 BCE) Trygaeus mocks a priest who attends sacrifice only to get a good meal and suggests that he should ‘go and eat the Sibyl’.<sup>11</sup> Aristophanes presupposes that the audience is familiar with the Sibyl.

By nature the Sibyls were women who prophesied in an ecstatic manner on divine inspiration. Originally associated with Asia Minor their popularity had spread all over the Mediterranean world by the Hellenistic age. By the first century BCE Sibyls were connected with specific locations.<sup>12</sup> There were believed to be multiple Sibyls, including a Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, Greek and even a Hebrew Sibyl.<sup>13</sup> Varro (166-27 BCE) lists ten localised Sibyls<sup>14</sup> while according to Pausanias<sup>15</sup> (ca. 115-180 CE) the Sibyls travelled among the

---

<sup>4</sup> See also Collins, 2012, 188-192.

<sup>5</sup> Collins, 2012, 185.

<sup>6</sup> The fragments of the pagan Sibyls were collected by Charles Alexandre (Alexandre, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> Schürer, 1986, 618.

<sup>8</sup> Plutarch, Pyth. orac. 6 cf. Heraclitus, frg. 92.

<sup>9</sup> Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.2.

<sup>10</sup> Aristophanes, Eq., 31.

<sup>11</sup> Aristophanes, Pax, 1116. The Sibyl is also mentioned in 1095.

<sup>12</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Lactantius, Inst. 1.6 (quoting from a lost work by Varro) lists ten Sibyls.

<sup>14</sup> Apud Lactantius, Inst. 1.6.8-12.

communities which claimed them (Delphi, Delos, Erythrae, Marpessus, and Alexandria in the Troad).<sup>16</sup> However, in recent scholarship the complex debate about the various Sibyls is usually regarded as a *Gespensterdebatte*.<sup>17</sup> While in most Judeo-Christian Sibylline Oracles the Sibyl is not localised, she is associated with Erythrae in 3.814 and with Delphi in 11.315. Quotations from the original pagan Sibylline oracles are transmitted by Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150 – ca. 215 CE)<sup>18</sup>. Clement's *Stromateis* describe the Delphic origins of the Sibyl using Plutarch as a source.<sup>19</sup>

The Sibyl from Erythrae, Asia Minor, was the most famous one. Therefore the Sibyl in the oldest extant Jewish Sibylline oracles, namely the Third Sibylline Oracle (henceforth Sib. Or. 3), is identified with the famous Erythraean seer even though she claims to come from Babylonia.<sup>20</sup> However, she also claims to be the daughter in law of Noah.<sup>21</sup> The Third Sibyl is thus not only connected to the famous pagan Sibyl but also to Jewish history.<sup>22</sup>

By her very nature, the Sibyl is a prophet inspired by the gods. Her prophecies are delivered in hexameters and she utters them in frenzy<sup>23</sup> which links her with two other important Greek prophetesses, the Pythia<sup>24</sup> and Cassandra.<sup>25</sup> A motif the Sibyl and Cassandra share in particular is being disbelieved by those who will in time realise the truth of their prophecies.<sup>26</sup>

Due to the lack of evidence for pagan Sibylline Books, it is impossible to deduce any direct derivation of or dependence on pagan prototypes.<sup>27</sup> In some instances, however, it seems that the Sibyls borrowed from their predecessors and imitated their style. In Sib. Or. 3.414ff and 11.163ff Homer's alleged foretelling of the Trojan War is treated. Chances are the subject was also treated in the pagan originals and was then adopted by Jewish and Christian Sibyllists. Parke notes 'a number of passages [...] where the style and subject matter strongly suggest verbal borrowing from a classical original'<sup>28</sup>. Not only the epic style but also the Sibyl's

<sup>15</sup> Pausanias, *Descr.* 10.12.

<sup>16</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 4. Cf. commentary on lines 814ff.

<sup>17</sup> Gauger, 1998, 443.

<sup>18</sup> Clement, *Strom.* 6.5.42-43.

<sup>19</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 75. Cf. Plutarch, *Pyth. Orac.* 398C-E.

<sup>20</sup> Sib. Or. 3.808ff.

<sup>21</sup> Sib. Or. 3.820ff.

<sup>22</sup> Refer to commentary section for discussion.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Sib 3.810; Pausanias, *Descr.* 10.12.3; Phlegon, *FGH* 257 F 37 (V) 11.2-3, 5; Virgil, *Aen.* 3.443; Cicero, *Div.* 1.4, 2.110; Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1214-16, 1256-7; Virgil, *Aen.* 6.77-80.

<sup>24</sup> Plato (*Phaedr.* 244B) cites 'the Sibyl' as an example of inspired prophecy in the same context as the Pythia and the priestesses at Dodona (Lightfoot, 2007, 4).

<sup>25</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Sib 3.816-818, cf. 11.320-321; Phlegon, *FGH* 257 F 37 (V), 1.5. For Cassandra see Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1240-1.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Parke, 1988, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Parke, 1988, 5. Cf. Sib. Or. 3.433ff and 5.306ff.



interest in specific places in Greece and Asia Minor suggest that here she may be influenced by earlier sources.<sup>29</sup>

## 1.2 The Jewish and Christian Sibylline Oracles

### 1.2.1 The transmission of Sibylline Fragments by Christian authors

The impact of the oracles on Christian authors is evident in the Church Fathers where they are quoted more than a hundred times.<sup>30</sup> The Sibyl, even though an outsider to Judaism, is seen in line with the biblical prophets and confirming their predictions by later Christian authors such as Lactantius, Constantine, and Augustine.<sup>31</sup> However, unlike the Third Sibyl they make not effort to connect the Sibyls to Judaism or Christianity, on the contrary, Christian writers even ‘go to a considerable length to anchor [them] in paganism’<sup>32</sup>. In the Medieval Age the Sibyl was very popular among Christian scholars. Prior to this, her prophecies were only available in Latin and the books attributed to her only through scattered quotations. New Latin prophecies were also produced and translated into numerous European languages. The Judeo-Christian Sibylline prophecies were highly popular because they announced the coming of Christ. They were known only and transmitted through the writings of Theophilus (*Ad Autolyicum*), Lactantius (*Divinae institutiones*) and Augustine (*De civitate Dei*). Lactantius’ *Divinae institutiones* is of particular importance because it contains Varro’s list of the various Sibyls<sup>33</sup> which would later on inspire her diverse depictions, for example in the Sistine Chapel. Up until the early Renaissance Greek Sibylline prophecies were only available in Western Europe through quotations in these early Christian writings.<sup>34</sup>

### 1.2.2 The Sibyl as a Jewish pseudepigraph

Much like the biblical prophets, the real Sibyls never wrote anything down. It is therefore not surprising that the Sibylline genre was attractive for Jews and Christians alike who wished to express themselves via the ways and means of Greek culture. Their later influence in history consisted in part in the written oracles attributed to them. By putting prophecies about the Jewish people in the mouth of a Gentile prophetess, Judaism is praised by an outsider.<sup>35</sup> Counting 829 verses Sib. Or. 3 is one of the longest extant texts of Hellenistic Judaism.

---

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Parke, 1988, 5. While most scholars agree with Parke and attribute the Sibyl’s oracles against the cities of Asia Minor to a pagan source or one that imitates their style, Buitenwerf has argued that they may stem from a Jew in Asia Minor at the time of Mithridates (see the discussion below on the date of the Third Sibyl).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Thompson, 1952, 115-136.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 85.

<sup>32</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 85.

<sup>33</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 84.

### 1.2.3 The beginning of the Third Sibylline Oracle

It is generally agreed that the first 92 verses of the third book originally constituted the end of a different book, namely the second.<sup>36</sup> Fragments 1 and 3, however, are believed to have been the original beginning of book 3.<sup>37</sup> Lactantius (ca. 250-317 CE) cites several passages from these fragments and from Sib. Or. 3 and attributes them to the Erythraean Sibyl.<sup>38</sup> The passages cited in addition to those from the fragments are Sib. Or. 3.228-29, 618, 619-23, 741-43, 763-66, 775, 788-92 and 815-18. However, lengthy sections of the book are not attested.

Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215 CE) cites Sib. Or. 3 586-88 and 590-94. Theophilus of Antioch (second century) cites Sib. Or. 3 97-103 and 105. The passage about the tower of Babel in Sib. Or. 3 97-107 was cited by Alexander Polyhistor who compiled his work in the period between 80 and 40 BCE, and by Josephus<sup>39</sup> who borrowed some of his work from Polyhistor. Alexander Polyhistor's paraphrase of the tower of Babel narrative shows many correspondences with Sib. Or. 3.97-107 (preserved in Eusebius' *Chronica*) and is almost identical to Josephus'.<sup>40</sup> Pagan sources dealing with the tower of Babel are not known to have existed which makes it likely that Polyhistor knew Sib. Or. 3 in one form or another. I shall discuss the relation of the Third Sibyl to these sources in the commentary part.

### 1.3 History of research

In recent years the Sibyl 'has evidently fallen from the lofty perch that once won her a place on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel'<sup>41</sup>. The dissertation by Rieuwerd Buitenwerf<sup>42</sup>, published in 2003, is the first full monograph devoted to this text in more than 30 years. In his publication, Buitenwerf provides us with a lengthy and thorough piece of history of research<sup>43</sup> which does not require repetition. I shall therefore focus on the more recent publications on the Third Sibylline Oracle and hence will examine issues raised by this abstract in order to reattempt a dating and localisation of Sib. Or. 3.

---

<sup>36</sup> Geffcken, 1902, XXI-LIII, 52-53; Kurfeß, 1954, 287; Collins, 1984, 359f; Gauger, 1998, 489; Buitenwerf, 2003, 89-91; Lightfoot, 2007, 96.

<sup>37</sup> This has been argued at length by Buitenwerf, 2003, 65-91.

<sup>38</sup> Lactantius, *Inst.* 1.6.13-14 cf. Sib. Or. 3.813-14.

<sup>39</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 1.118.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.118-119.

<sup>41</sup> Collins, 2005, 82.

<sup>42</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 5-64.

### 1.3.1 Early scholarship and the Sibylline Oracles

During the first half of the sixteenth century, and in the course of critical scholarship, scholars eventually became aware of the possibility that the Sibylline quotations were early Christian forgeries (see above).

The first edition of the extant Jewish-Christian Sibylline Oracles (books 1-8) was published by the Augsburg scholar Xystus Betuleius (1501-1554) in 1545.<sup>44</sup> Betuleius discovered manuscripts containing the Greek Sibylline oracles, when he undertook an edition of the works of Lactantius. He wished to prove the authenticity of the quotations which occur, for instance, in Lactantius' works. Betuleius was of the opinion that the Sibylline Oracles once formed the pagan counterpart to the Old Testament prophecies.<sup>45</sup> It is important to note at this point that Betuleius had problems numbering the books because the numbering he found in the manuscripts was inconsistent. He therefore divided the first book into what is now Book 1 and 2. Initially scholars denied the pagan origins of the Sibyls. The Sibylline Oracles were believed to be of Christian origin entirely by Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563) and Betuleius.<sup>46</sup>

Eventually Dutch historian Isaac Vossius (1618-1689) became aware of the latent Jewish elements within the Sibylline Oracles and soon declared them to be Jewish as a whole.<sup>47</sup> According to Vossius Hellenistic Jews were at some point inspired by the divine spirit to write the pseudepigrapha about the coming of Christ that were attributed to the biblical authorities such as Adam, Abraham or Moses on the one hand or to pagan authorities such as the Sibyl or Hystaspes on the other.<sup>48</sup> When Jesus came the Jews rejected him and the Sibylline Oracles as frauds. The idea that the Sibylline Oracles contained Jewish elements did not win broad acceptance and a Christian origin was favoured by scholars.<sup>49</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century, however, no scholar had yet to be convinced about the Jewish elements within the Sibylline Oracles.

### 1.3.2 The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

In 1817 books 9-14 were published after their rediscovery in the Vatican library by philologist Angelo Mai, the later prefect of the Vatican Library.<sup>50</sup> When the historical critical method was developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries it was not only applied to biblical texts but also to the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha. Scholars began studying the

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Collins, 1984, 321.

<sup>45</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 10.

<sup>47</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 19-20; Vossius, 1680.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 20.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 22.

<sup>50</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 29.

individual books of the Sibyllines rather than the collection as a whole. Sib. Or. 3 has received more attention than the other books of the collection, partly because it has been deemed the oldest book within the collection.

### 1.3.3 The Third Sibylline Oracle

In the nineteenth century the Third Sibyl was already widely acknowledged to have originated in Egyptian Judaism.<sup>51</sup> From 1841-1856 C. Alexandre published a new Greek edition in which he distinguished three classes of manuscripts and also provided a Latin translation. In 1891 A. Rzach (1850-1935) published another edition of the Sibylline Oracles<sup>52</sup> and further developed Alexandre's division of manuscripts.<sup>53</sup> One of Rzach's major contributions to the study of the Sibylline Oracles is a comparison with the language of Homer and Hesiod. In 1902 Geffcken's edition was published, which has become the standard critical edition until the modern day. According to Geffcken, the oldest stratum of Sib. Or. 3 is Jewish and consists of quotations from the pagan Babylonian and Persian Sibyls. Geffcken proposed a closeness of Sib. Or. 3 (or at least parts of it) to the time of Mithridates which was picked up on by Buitenwerf in his monograph.<sup>54</sup> In the same year he also published an introduction to the Sibylline Oracles.<sup>55</sup>

Emil Schürer<sup>56</sup> identifies the Sibyl of Sib. Or. 3 as the Babylonian or Chaldean Sibyl. In the Jewish sections the style of the pagan Sibylline oracles was used. Their purpose was to convert pagans to Judaism. Schürer divides between lines 1-92 (once the end of a now lost book) and 93-829 while Theophilus' quotations once formed part of the beginning of the third book.

Many publications regarding the Sibylline Oracles from the twentieth century are of very general nature and provide little detail. The Sibylline oracles have often been treated as specimen of apocalyptic tradition.<sup>57</sup> In particular, the discussion about a possible relation to the Essenes was developed and then revived when Qumran was excavated in 1947.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 31f.

<sup>52</sup> Rzach, 1891.

<sup>53</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 43.

<sup>54</sup> Geffcken, 1902b, 8-9. Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 304-320.

<sup>55</sup> Geffcken, 1902a.

<sup>56</sup> Schürer, 1909, 555-595.

<sup>57</sup> See discussion on pp. 1-2 above.

<sup>58</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 50.

A notable edition was published by Kurfeß in 1951, this being the first to provide a German translation of the Third Sibylline Oracle. However, his translation is also subject to criticism because it leaves out large parts of the text without explanation.<sup>59</sup>

For many scholars, the Sibylline Oracles formed an important piece of evidence for the so-called Hellenization of the Jews outside Palestine. The Sibylline Oracles were, and still are, a prime example of Jewish acculturation in the Diaspora. For some scholars the Sibylline Oracles provided evidence for the development of Jewish missionary activity.<sup>60</sup> In 1956 this was successfully refuted by Tcherikover who believed the Sibylline Oracles are forgeries since the Sibyls, supposed they existed, did not write their prophecies down (very much like the biblical prophets).<sup>61</sup> The use of the Sibylline genre alone does therefore not serve as proof for missionary activity.<sup>62</sup> Rather, the Sibyl served as a vehicle for the Jews in the Diaspora to make their beliefs known in a pagan world.

The first full monograph on the Third Sibyl was published by Valentin Nikiprowetzky in 1970.<sup>63</sup> In it he claims that Sib. Or. 3 is a literary unity in which no pagan sources can be discerned and that it was composed in the first century BCE during the reign of Cleopatra. This view did, however, not win much acceptance.<sup>64</sup>

The most influential researcher in relation to the Sibylline Oracles in the past 30 years has undoubtedly been John J. Collins. Collin's first notable encounter with the Third Sibyl was in 1972 when he reviewed Nikiprowetzky's monograph in RBL when he was still working on his doctoral thesis<sup>65</sup> at Harvard. With the publication of his thesis on Sib. Or. 3 and 5 in 1974 Collins held that the Sibylline Oracles were generally used as a vehicle for political propaganda.<sup>66</sup> Sib. Or. 3 is thereby the first document to explicitly address the political relations between Jews and non-Jews in the Diaspora. According to Collins, the Sibylline Oracles are often vehicles for hostility towards the Gentile world, especially in the Roman era. Since Collin's 1974 publication, the general consensus of scholars has been that the book is a composite work but that it is possible to identify an original core, composed in Egypt in the middle of the second century BCE.

Collin's reconstruction of the genesis of Sib. Or. 3 largely follows that of Geffcken. He rejects Nikiprowetzky's idea of Sib. Or. 3 as a literary unit. Instead he maintains that it is a

---

<sup>59</sup> Lines (1-92), 166-212 and 725-740 (also 762-766, 768, 776) are left out of his edition altogether. This is followed by Gauger in his edition from 1998.

<sup>60</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 52.

<sup>61</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 52.

<sup>62</sup> Tcherikover, 1957, 169-193.

<sup>63</sup> Nikiprowetzky, 1970.

<sup>64</sup> Collins, 2004, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Collins, 1972; Collins, 1984, 355-356.

<sup>66</sup> Collins, 1974, 1-19.

collection of Jewish political oracles. Collins argues that the ‘seventh king’ (see below) should be identified as Ptolemy IV Philometor or VIII Euergetes (Physcon) of Egypt and accordingly, he dates the main body of oracles of Sib. Or. 3 to second century BCE Egypt.<sup>67</sup> Collins also discovered an eschatological scheme of judgement in Sib. Or. 3: destruction, exile and the eventual restoration at the advent of a new king who is, in three out of four passages, the seventh king of Egypt.<sup>68</sup>

Collins puts forward the author’s interest in the temple as further evidence of its Egyptian origins. He argues that Sib. Or. 3 stems from proximity to Onias III, who was forced to flee Jerusalem in 162 BCE and whose son Onias IV founded another temple at Leontopolis during the reign of Philometor (180-145 BCE).<sup>69</sup> However, it should be noted that Sib. Or. 3 does not contain any direct reference to Leontopolis whatsoever.<sup>70</sup>

Rather than being missionary, Sib. Or. 3 is directed to pagans and Jews alike. According to Collins, the author is trying to reconcile Judaism and Hellenism (while at the same time Judaism is superior in its moral ways), very much like Pseudo-Aristeas or Philo of Alexandria. Thereby he also claims that the only religious notion that is explicitly Jewish in Sib. Or. 3 is the veneration of the one God. Apart from some minor deviations Collins’s views have gained broad acceptance in modern scholarship.

#### 1.3.4 Recent Scholarship

In the past ten years the Third Sibyl experienced a certain renaissance. Barclay, Gruen, Collins, Buitenwerf, and others have published research on the Third Sibyl in recent years. Barclay and Gruen have deviated from the consensus to a certain degree while Collins still maintains it. Buitenwerf has rejected the Egyptian origin of the Third Sibyl and a second century dating altogether. He locates the book in first century BCE Asia Minor. I will sum up briefly the current scholarship and research.

The consensus established by Collins has recently been challenged by Erich Gruen.<sup>71</sup> A turning point is marked by his book ‘Heritage and Hellenism’<sup>72</sup> and his essay ‘Jews, Greeks, and Romans in the Third Sibylline Oracle’<sup>73</sup>. In both he rejects the notion that the seventh king refers to either one of the Ptolemies and that most of Sib. Or. 3 originated in Egypt,

---

<sup>67</sup> Collins, 1974, 29 cf. Collins, 1984, 356 where he pinpoints the date to approximately 160-50 BCE, shortly before the building of the temple of Leontopolis at the hands of Onias III.

<sup>68</sup> Collins, 1974, 61-75.

<sup>69</sup> Josephus, Ant. 13.3.

<sup>70</sup> Collins also noted this later (Collins, 1984, 356).

<sup>71</sup> Gruen, 1998a, 269f.

<sup>72</sup> Gruen, 1998a.

<sup>73</sup> Gruen, 1998b.

which until then, most scholars maintained following Collins.<sup>74</sup> Gruen interprets Sib. Or. 3 with no reference to *Zeitgeschichte* and concludes that it is counterproductive to try and find an exact date and place of origin since the individual portions stem from different times and places. In his opinion, Sib. Or. 3 first and foremost endeavours a vindication of the Jewish faith. The Romans are evil and will be punished by God; the Greeks, on the other hand, are invited to partake in salvation on the assumption they accept the one true God. For Gruen, this shows that the author(s) were deeply involved in Hellenised culture without ever losing their allegiance to Jewish faith.

In 1998 Gauger published a new reworked edition for Kurfelß' text.<sup>75</sup> Gauger also rejects Collin's interpretation of the seventh king as well as the idea of an anti-Roman bias in a Jewish work from the second century BCE. Gauger accounts for the manifold and divergent historical references<sup>76</sup> within the book and narrows the question of the Third Sibyl's date down to the relationship between Jews and Rome<sup>77</sup> before 70 CE because the references to Rome probably contain the youngest stratum of the Third Sibyl. Gauger concludes that 32/31 BCE (the battle of Actium) must provide the *terminus a quo* while 70 CE marks the *terminus ante quem* because there is no reference to the destruction of the temple.<sup>78</sup> here are serious flaws to this argument. First of all, he, like most scholars, presupposes that the book is of Egyptian origin. Secondly, he seems to overlook line 328 where Rome is indeed accused of having destroyed the temple. Among the more recent publications the translation and introduction published by Helmuth Merkel in JSRZ in 1998 (reprinted in 2003) is noteworthy. His German translation is preferable over that of Kurfelß/Gauger because it provides the entire text of Sib.Or. 3.

In his publication 'Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora'<sup>79</sup> Barclay discussed the Third Sibyl in a chapter titled 'Cultural Antagonism'.<sup>80</sup> This positioning is certainly questionable. Barclay follows the consensus worked out by Collins and assigns books 3 and 5 of the Sibylline Oracles to Egyptian Judaism.<sup>81</sup> He regards the Third Sibyl as 'important evidence of the social and political attitudes of certain Egyptian Jews during'<sup>82</sup> the second century BCE. Barclay identifies an original corpus and attributes the injection of new oracles to the continuing vitality of the Sibylline tradition. His interpretation of Sib. Or. 3 and 5 relies

---

<sup>74</sup> Except Millar (1972) who suggested a Palestinian origin.

<sup>75</sup> Gauger, 1998.

<sup>76</sup> Gauger, 1998, 442-445.

<sup>77</sup> Gauger, 1998, 445-451.

<sup>78</sup> Gauger, 1998, 447.

<sup>79</sup> Barclay, 1996.

<sup>80</sup> Barclay, 1996, 216-228.

<sup>81</sup> Barclay, 1996, 218.

<sup>82</sup> Barclay, 1996, 219.

principally on their supposed political, i.e. Egyptian, context. With regard to lines 350-89 he remarks that during the rise of Rome in the Eastern Mediterranean the hostility of the Sibyl was turned against this new empire and attributes the section to the first century BCE accordingly following Collins.<sup>83</sup> He goes as far as saying against this background ‘one can understand the strength of the Jews’ physical resistance in the upheavals of 4 and 66 CE’<sup>84</sup>. Many scholars have doubted that an anti-Roman oracle in a Jewish work could date from the second century BCE.<sup>85</sup> It is generally agreed that the prediction of Asian triumph over Rome in Sib. Or. 3.350-80 originated in the first century BCE during the rise of Rome in the Eastern Mediterranean. The same applies to lines 1-96.

Despite Barclay’s general agreement with Collins he finds his view that there is a positive attitude towards the Ptolemies unconvincing. Rather than a historical figure or event the seventh king signals a particular time in which the events prophesied by the Sibyl will happen.<sup>86</sup> The king himself is no agent but rather a harbinger. It is not clear that the seventh king is identical with the king from the sun, let alone that he is a Ptolemaic king.<sup>87</sup> He also notes that it is impossible to date the book with closer precision.<sup>88</sup>

Barclay notes that Sib. Or. 3 holds fast to the traditional connection to the land of Israel/Judah and the Jerusalem temple in particular.<sup>89</sup> However, the text mentions neither explicitly. According to Barclay the glory of Israel is assured while the kingdoms of the earth are doomed.<sup>90</sup> We shall see that this observation is inaccurate because the Sibyl has no interest in Israel in particular. He correctly notes though that the law and the temple go in tandem frequently.<sup>91</sup> This will become important in my investigation.

Barclay compares Sib. Or. 3 to Sib. Or. 5 where one can observe the effect that the destruction of the temple in 70 BC had on the author.<sup>92</sup> He subsequently links messianic eschatology such as speculations on the return of Nero (who is blamed for the destruction of the Temple in Sib. Or. 5), or Rome in general to the historical events in Egypt in the second century CE (5.168-178).<sup>93</sup> He suggests that Sib. Or. 5 is close to the ideology which inspired the Diaspora Revolt of 116-117 CE.<sup>94</sup> It is certainly easier to relate Sib. Or. 5 to specific

---

<sup>83</sup> Barclay, 1996, 225.

<sup>84</sup> Barclay, 1996, 225.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Collins, 1974, 31.

<sup>86</sup> Barclay, 1996, 222f.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Barclay, 1996, 222.

<sup>88</sup> Barclay, 1996, 219.

<sup>89</sup> Barclay, 1996, 221.

<sup>90</sup> Barclay, 1996, 220.

<sup>91</sup> Barclay, 1996, 221 n. 69.

<sup>92</sup> Barclay, 1996, 225.

<sup>93</sup> Barclay, 1996, 227.

<sup>94</sup> Barclay, 1996, 227.



political and historical events since it contains direct references to those. It is hard to identify the political circumstances in Sib. Or. 3 due to the lack of clear references.

Barclay also follows the interpretation of Momigliano that Sib. Or. 3 'reflects a revival of Jewish nationalistic sentiment in the wake of the Maccabean revolt'<sup>95</sup>. This would indeed fit the reign of Philometor (180-145 BCE) in Egypt. Barclay claims by analogy that echoes of Dan 7 in 3.396-397 confirm this impression.<sup>96</sup> He concludes that despite the lack of reference to either the Maccabees or to the land Sib. Or. 3 could be seen as a testimony of Egyptian Judaism for the centrality of the 'Jew's national greatness, centred on temple and law, in parallel to Maccabean ideology'<sup>97</sup>. Barclay assumes that under the impression of the invasion of Egypt by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BCE, Egyptian Jews were using the Sibylline genre to express and reassure their eschatological expectations for divine intervention on their behalf.<sup>98</sup> Although the adoption of the Sibylline genre points to a certain degree of acculturation (the Sibyl being a non-Jewish prophetess, the usage of Hexameters and Homeric epithets for God) the Sibyllines are a far cry from the court-culture of Aristobolus and Pseudo-Aristeas.<sup>99</sup> Barclay is very tendentious in his evaluation of the milieu of the Sibylline Oracles, which according to him is the streets, not the academy.<sup>100</sup> This is a complete disregard for what constitutes the Sibylline genre and book 3 in particular (for instance the implied universalism, the stoic notion of natural law, and the de-nationalisation of God's divine dominion). While the Third Sibyl was not composed at the Alexandrian court it is most certainly not the product of commoner either. The Sibylline Oracles are not trying to join the philosophical ranks of Philo or Pseudo-Aristeas, they have their own agenda. Nonetheless, all three of them share certain philosophical ideas.<sup>101</sup>

Barclay ascribes the Third Sibyl to lower-class Alexandrian Jews who repelled cultural assimilation and sustained their Jewish tradition down to the Roman period.<sup>102</sup> However, nothing in the text particularly points to this dating nor is there particular cultural antagonism. If there was as much of an antagonism and scorn of non-Jews as Barclay says, Collins infers, 'why would they write in epic hexameters, in the name of a pagan prophetess?'<sup>103</sup> Accusation and appeal are two sides of the same coin. In four admonitions placed carefully in the book the Sibyl appeals to the Greek to turn to God. The conversion of the Gentiles is a theme which

---

<sup>95</sup> Barclay, 1996, 223 cf. Momigliano, 1975, 1081.

<sup>96</sup> Barclay, 1996, 223.

<sup>97</sup> Barclay, 1996, 223.

<sup>98</sup> Barclay, 1996, 224.

<sup>99</sup> Barclay, 1996, 224.

<sup>100</sup> Barclay, 1996, 225.

<sup>101</sup> This will be discussed in Part III.

<sup>102</sup> Barclay, 1996, 225.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 84.

is not uncommon in Hellenistic Jewish literature, found for instance in Philo's works. Collins, on the other hand, is of the opinion that although the universalism in Sib. Or. 3 is 'triumphalist and condescending'<sup>104</sup> it is yet far removed from the hostility found in Sib. Or. 5. According to Collins the 'seventh king' and the 'king from the sun' - provided they are identical – 'show that the Sibyl expected that a favourable Ptolemaic ruler would play a role in bringing about the great conversion [of the nations]'.<sup>105</sup>

Over against the denunciation of the nations stands the praise of the people of God. The Sibyl (like Paul<sup>106</sup>, Wis 13 and Philo, for that matter)<sup>107</sup> presupposes the stoic concept of natural law according to which essential law is known to every nation and person by nature.<sup>108</sup> While the Sibyl was devoted to the biblical, she treats it in fact as natural law with no reference to dietary laws or circumcision of the converts. She is particularistic quite in contrast to Pseudo-Aristeas where Zeus is equalled with the one God.<sup>109</sup>

Sib. Or. 3 is generally agreed to contain the oldest Jewish material of the collection. In its present form, though, it is a patchwork rather than a literary unit. Scholars therefore assume a secondary nature of 1-96 (attacks against Rome). The references to the seventh king, on the other hand, point to Ptolemy Philometor (180-145 BCE). Collins claims that the reference to the 'seventh king' marks a positive appreciation and favourable attitude.<sup>110</sup> Barclay argues against this interpretation. It is by no means clear that 'the king from the sun' (652-56) is the same as the seventh king.<sup>111</sup> While Collins proposes an identification of the 'seventh king' as a messianic figure rather than a specific king<sup>112</sup> Gauger rejects the idea of the king being Ptolemaic altogether.<sup>113</sup>

Most recently Buitenwerf not only rejected the core composition and the second century dating but the Egyptian provenance altogether.<sup>114</sup> The doctoral thesis titled 'The Third Sibylline Oracle and its Social Setting' by Buitenwerf which was published in 2003 is the most recent comprehensive study on the Third Sibyl and the first monograph since Nikiprowetzky's in 1970.<sup>115</sup> The excellent history of research in section I of the book as well

---

<sup>104</sup> Collins, 2000, 161.

<sup>105</sup> Collins, 2000, 161.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Rom 2:14: ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος.

<sup>107</sup> See Part III: The Law in the Third Sibyl.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 162.

<sup>109</sup> Let. Aris. 16.

<sup>110</sup> Collins, 1974, 38-44 and 1984, 354-59.

<sup>111</sup> Barclay, 1996, 223.

<sup>112</sup> Collins, 2000, 88ff.

<sup>113</sup> Gauger, 1998, 501.

<sup>114</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, esp. 124-34.

<sup>115</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003. Minor publications since: Collins, 2004; Hagedorn, 2010.

as an exposition of manuscript evidence are its particular merits. The book offers a full commentary of book 3 and covers many of the linguistic particularities. Buitenwerf's approach is unitarian, hence the references to Rome, particularly in lines 350-62, provide the *terminus a quo*. The real novelty in Buitenwerf's work is that he locates the Third Sibyl in Asia Minor based on the oracles against Rome and the frequent references to Asia (Minor) in lines 401-488. Whereas previously scholars<sup>116</sup> took the references to the seventh king as a basis for the dating and location of the Third Sibyl, Buitenwerf chose the references to Asia. A key argument of his is that the three references to the 'seventh king' are not identical ('seventh reign', 'the seventh generation of kings', 'the young seventh king of Egypt').<sup>117</sup> For that reason Buitenwerf argues that, while the author did not refer to a specific Ptolemaic king of Egypt, the Ptolemaic dynasty is used but as a chronological frame of reference.<sup>118</sup> He grants the similarities between the three passages, particularly the recurrence of the number seven, which 'suggest that the author intended to refer to the same period in all three passages'<sup>119</sup>. It is, however, evident from the difference in wording and reference that the author did not have a specific king in mind.<sup>120</sup> Buitenwerf suggests reading the underlying references to the Ptolemies in light of 'the author's habit of describing world history in terms of successive kingdoms'<sup>121</sup>. The Ptolemies indeed were the last stable dynasty during the rise of Rome in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>122</sup> The Roman conquest of Greece (3.171-193) in 146 BCE, the fall of Carthage (3.484) and the destruction of Corinth (3.487-488) point to the second century BCE. In 3.464-469 the author refers to the Italian Civil war, which started in 91 BCE. Lines 3.350-362 presuppose the Roman oppression of Asia (Mithridatic Wars, also started in 88). Provided this is correct, Sib. Or. 3 originated not earlier than some time after 80 BCE.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the author shows more concern about the Romans than about the Ptolemies (3.175-191) which makes it unlikely that it was written in Egypt in the second century BCE. The only ground for a second century dating is the ordinal number 'seventh' in lines 193, 318 and 608. Buitenwerf explains the frequent occurrence of Egypt via its ongoing (economic) importance through the first century BCE. The numerous topographical references, on the other hand, point to the Roman province of Asia and adjacent districts. Almost all cities, villages, mountains and rivers mentioned belong to Asia Minor. Asia is

---

<sup>116</sup> Except Gruen and Millar (see above).

<sup>117</sup> Contra Collins, 2000, 83.

<sup>118</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 128-29; 188; 265.

<sup>119</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 265.

<sup>120</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 265.

<sup>121</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 189.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 189.

<sup>123</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 127.

mentioned 15 times total in Sib. Or. 3.<sup>124</sup> Buitenwerf's conclusion assumes that Sib. Or. 3 was composed *ab initio* as a literary unit. His literary unit is, according to Collins, merely an outline of 'structure, which is little more than a table of contents',<sup>125</sup>.

Buitenwerf is the first to argue that the entire book was composed in Asia Minor. He has two primary arguments for this. First of all, the frequency in which Asia and places in Asia are mentioned. However, the bulk of them occurs in 295 to 488, the section which Collins regards to be 'anomalous in the book',<sup>126</sup> and possibly from a different hand. Only three of 15 references fall outside this section. Collins takes this as the basis for an argument against the compositional unity of the book.<sup>127</sup> Secondly, the Sibyl is designated as the Erythraean Sibyl (813-14), the very famous Asian Sibyl. However, she in fact claims to have originated in Babylon<sup>128</sup> and Sibyls were well known throughout the Greek-speaking world. Yet she also claims to be related to Noah who, in Sib. Or. 1 and 2, is strongly associated with Asia Minor. Collins concludes on these grounds that Buitenwerf's assumption of literary coherence is implausible.<sup>129</sup> Collins's major argument, on the other hand, rests on the interpretation of the 'seventh king' and his identification with the 'king from the sun'. Buitenwerf renders to the king in line 652 as a king from the east rather than from the sun while both translations of ἀπ' ἡελίοιο are grammatically possible. This matter shall be looked into.

It is not only the Third Sibyl that has gained scholarly attention in recent years. Two monographs have been published on book 1 and 2: One by the Oxonian philologist Jane Lightfoot in 2007 and one by Olaf Waßmuth in 2011. Lightfoot's book is of particular interest for a student of the Third Sibyl because she discussed many of its passages in relation to the LXX. While Buitenwerf is of the opinion that the Third Sibyl quoted the LXX only from memory or hearsay<sup>130</sup>, Lightfoot has shown that the Sibyl alludes to the LXX repeatedly and intentionally.<sup>131</sup> Lightfoot has In addition discussed the Sibyl in light of John Barton's study of the transformation of prophecy in the Second Temple period of which the rise of prophecy was one feature.<sup>132</sup> Pseudepigraphy made it possible not only to circumvent the belief that the age of prophecy had passed but also to guise ex eventu prophecy in the cloak of a prophet from the past and to make long range prophecies from the beginning of the world until its

<sup>124</sup> Sib. Or. 3.168, 342, 350, 351, 353, 354, 367, 381, 388, 391, 416, 437, 450, 599, 611.

<sup>125</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 139-43 cf. Collins, 2004, 6.

<sup>126</sup> Collins, 2004, 17.

<sup>127</sup> Collins, 2004, 17.

<sup>128</sup> Lines 809-810.

<sup>129</sup> Collins, 2004, 6.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 321-333 esp. 327, 332.

<sup>131</sup> See Lightfoot, 2007, 220-242.

<sup>132</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 60. Cf. Barton, 1986.

predicted end. Waßmuth, on the other hand, provides an interesting analysis of the Titan- and the Golden Age motives in the Sibylline Oracles.<sup>133</sup>

In 1987 Panayiotou provided addenda to LSJ on the Sibylline vocabulary.<sup>134</sup> The vocabulary used in Sib. Or. 3 is not covered by the original LSJ and only partially by Lampe's patristic Greek lexicon. The Sibylline oracles contain many words that do not occur elsewhere in Greek literature.

This study does not offer a full new translation of Sib. Or. 3. I provide a different translation to the ones available only where necessary. I follow the reading of Geffcken unless it raises serious doubt. With regard to the manuscripts important work has been done by Buitenwerf which shall be considered if need be. My translations of the Third Sibyl are freely adapted from the translations currently available. All translations of other texts are my own unless stated otherwise.

### **1.3.5 The date of the Third Sibyl: The seventh king, the king from the sun/east**

Endeavours to date and locate the Third Sibyl commonly rest on the references to the seventh reign or king of Egypt unless the book is regarded as a unit. The view that Sib. Or. 3 was composed in the mid-second century BCE in Egypt essentially rests on the interpretation of the three references to the 'seventh king'.<sup>135</sup> The seventh king is generally taken to be a Ptolemy, based on line 193: A king of Egypt, who will be of the Greeks by race. In order to propose a dating it is necessary to go into the three references briefly and take a look at scholarly positions so far.

In total, there are three explicit references to the seventh king.

In lines 175-195 it is said that the kingdom which will succeed the Macedonians will endure 'until the seventh reign when a king who will be of the Greeks by race will rule' (192f). The marker seventh is used to designate the time when Roman rule will end and the people of God will become a leading power in the world.<sup>136</sup> According to Collins the final kingdom before the rise of the people of God 'is quite unambiguously Rome'<sup>137</sup> and refers to the Roman conquest of Macedonia which took place in the reign of Philometor.<sup>138</sup> Nonetheless, it cannot be dated after the Maccabean revolt because the Maccabees looked on Rome as a friend and at Antiochus (Epiphanes) as an enemy. Not all the Jews in Egypt, however, would have been impressed by the Maccabees' friendship with Rome.

---

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Waßmuth, 2010, 154-172. With tables on p. 157 and p. 165.

<sup>134</sup> Panayiotou, 1987.

<sup>135</sup> 192-93, 318, 608.

<sup>136</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 189, 217.

<sup>137</sup> Collins, 2000, 88 cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 140.

<sup>138</sup> Collins, 2000, 89 cf. Collins, 2005, 96.

Concordantly, the author cannot be a supporter of the Maccabees.<sup>139</sup> It should be noted nonetheless that the Maccabees are neither mentioned directly nor indirectly in Sib. Or. 3. Barclay<sup>140</sup> therefore rejects Collin's claim that the references to the seventh king reflect a positive attitude towards the Ptolemies. Rather, he points to a revival of Jewish nationalistic sentiment in the wake of the Maccabean revolt. According to Barclay, Sib. Or. 3 was written for and read by people belonging to the lower social classes of Egypt. Gruen, on the other hand, doubts that the reference has to do with Egyptian Judaism at all and takes it as an eschatological reference.<sup>141</sup>

Lines 314-318 describe how Egypt will suffer severely from war and pestilence during the 'seventh generation of kings' (318) and how the afflictions will eventually come to an end. It might be noteworthy that Egypt is directly addressed here in contrast to 193. However, the role of the king is not specified. Instead the seventh generation is used to mark a certain point in time. Buitenwerf sees a strong similarity to line 193 here ('until the seventh reign/kingdom') and 608 ('when the young seventh king of Egypt reigns over the country'). The sequence of punishment and restoration for Egypt can also be found in the Hebrew Bible and in the LXX.<sup>142</sup> The oracle against Egypt furthermore disturbs the sequence in the section at hand wherefore it seems likely that it was inserted here at a later redactional stage to connect the other oracles in this section to the time of the seventh king.

Lines 608-609 herald that men will cast away their idols 'when the young (νέος) seventh king of Egypt' rules his own land. Again the passage does not specify the role of the king. It narrates how a great king will come from Asia and overthrow Egypt. This will be followed by a great conversion to God on part of the nations. Some scholars have suggested that the king from Asia is a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes.<sup>143</sup> Collins has modified this view by suggesting that the enemy coming from Asia is a more general motif, a 'part of an eschatological tableau'<sup>144</sup>, pretty much like the enemy from the North in the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. If that is the case lines 608-9 do not give us a clue to the specific reign of any of the Ptolemies nor to the position of the Jews in Egypt. I shall argue that the occurrence in lines 608-9 provides the original prophecy about the seventh king which inspired the other two. The other two are later additions to relate the role of the people of God to time of the seventh king.

---

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 89.

<sup>140</sup> Barclay, 1996, 222-228.

<sup>141</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 15-36.

<sup>142</sup> Isaiah 19 and Ezekiel 29:1-16.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Merkel, 2003, 1101, n. 611a.

<sup>144</sup> Collins, 2004, 14.

Gruen<sup>145</sup> argues that the numeral seventh (king) must not be taken literally but rather as a mystical timeframe while Collins discards this possibility altogether<sup>146</sup>. Collins may be right to suggest that the numeral is not completely incidental, however, one must not forget that similar use of numbers is well-known from biblical and Hellenistic Jewish writings.<sup>147</sup>

Collins suggests instead that Sib. Or. 3 looks for a Ptolemaic messiah figure like Isaiah looked for Cyrus.<sup>148</sup> Both ultimately look for the conversion of Gentiles. The king has a crucial role but ultimately is at the service of Judaism. According to Collins such attitudes are likely to have been attributed to Onias III prior to the Maccabean revolt.<sup>149</sup> Collins proposes the Oniads as possible originators of Sib. Or. 3 despite the evident lack of reference to Leontopolis. According to Collins 'the lack of specific reference to Palestine makes an Egyptian origin almost certain'<sup>150</sup>. However, the *argumentum e silentio* works both ways.<sup>151</sup> Buitenwerf observes that there are many references to Asia which casts doubt on Collins's argumentation. Buitenwerf suggests that the author refers to the seventh reign because Egypt was the last stable dynasty in the Mediterranean during the rise of Rome to becoming an Empire in the first century BCE. The seventh reign does not refer to a specific king or reign but rather to an appointed time.<sup>152</sup> In this respect he is less extreme than Gruen who reads the references to the seventh reign with no reference to history at all.

Line 652 mentions the so-called 'king from the sun' (ἄπ' ἡελίου). According to Collins, the identity of this king is the key to the political propaganda of the Sibyl.<sup>153</sup> He identifies the 'king from the sun' with the 'seventh king' based on a parallel in the Oracle of the Potter<sup>154</sup>. Here it is said that 'Egypt will increase when the king from Helios<sup>155</sup>, (ἄπ' ἡελίου), who will be benevolent for fifty-five years, comes into power, appointed by the greatest goddess Isis'<sup>156</sup>. In the Hellenistic-Egyptian Oracle of the Potter the king from Helios refers to old Pharaonic ideology<sup>157</sup>, where the king was understood as the son of the sun-god Re (Helios). The 'king from Helios' in the Oracle of the Potter is a native Egyptian king who is expected to overthrow the Ptolemies. The Potter's Oracle is directed against the Ptolemies;

---

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998a, 272-278.

<sup>146</sup> Collins, 2000, 85.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Gen 4:24; Dan 4:32; 12:7, 9-13; 1 En. 91:15; 93:3-10; 4 Ezra 12:10-30; Rev 12:3; 13:1.

<sup>148</sup> Collins, 2000, 95.

<sup>149</sup> Collins, 2000, 96.

<sup>150</sup> Collins, 2000, 87.

<sup>151</sup> Millar (1972) has suggested that a Palestinian origin is just as possible.

<sup>152</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 217.

<sup>153</sup> Collins, 1994, 61ff; Collins, 2000, 95f.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Koenen, 1968, 178-209.

<sup>155</sup> The king ἄπ' ἡελίου in the Oracle of the Potter which Collins renders as 'from the sun' is rendered as 'from Helios' in both editions by Koenen (1968 and 2002). See comments on lines 652-656.

<sup>156</sup> Collins, 1994, 57-69.

<sup>157</sup> Collins, 2000, 94.

consequently the ‘king from Helios’ can not be a Ptolemy.<sup>158</sup> Nonetheless, that does not rule out the possibility that the Ptolemies might have used Pharaonic terminology, on the contrary, it would have served to stress their authority and legitimacy as kings of Egypt. Collins therefore argues that the Ptolemies appropriated the Pharaonic ideology and titles of the Pharaohs and ‘were applied in abundance to Ptolemy V Epiphanes on the Rosetta Stone’<sup>159</sup>. In light of this possibility Collins translates ἀπ’ ἡελίοιο in the Third Sibyl as ‘from the sun’ and interprets the king as an *ex eventu* prophecy concerning a Ptolemaic king who was favourable towards the Jews, preferably Ptolemy VI Philometor, ‘a king of Egypt of Greek decent’ (line 193). Collins highlight the possibility that Egyptian Jews from the circles of Onias III, who had fled with him from Jerusalem, looked to a benevolent Ptolemaic as their saviour.<sup>160</sup> One of the flaws in Collins’s argument is that he fails to show convincingly why a supposed Jewish author would apply precisely that to a Ptolemaic king when it denotes a native Egyptian king in the Oracle of the Potter.

Other scholars agree that Sib. Or. 3 contains Egyptian royal terminology but also maintain that there is no direct reference to any king.<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, Collins’s ‘interpretation essentially rests on the identification of the seventh king with the ‘king from the sun’ which is not evident from the text at all. Other scholars propose that ‘from the sun’ may also be interpreted as ‘from the east’.<sup>162</sup> The most prominent analogy probably is the advent of the Persian king Cyrus in Is 41 (especially 41:2, 25) and 44:24ff. An eschatological geographical term would not be unusual for a Jewish document in antiquity, especially not in light of Isaiah. Furthermore, the term ἥλιος (sun) as a term for ‘East’ is not unattested in Greek literature.<sup>163</sup> Buitenwerf finds further evidence for a prophecy concerning a king from the East in the works of Phlegon of Tralles, whose work mainly consists of a collection of older material. He subsequently identifies the ‘king from the sun’ in lines 652-656 with the king from Asia in lines 611-615, who is said to cause the fall of Egypt.<sup>164</sup> Buitenwerf hypothesises that it is likely the material in question dates back to the Mithridatic Wars and served as propaganda for Mithridates. The king from the East who is mentioned in it will come from Asia, Asia being designated as the place where the sun rises, and conquer Rome.<sup>165</sup> A similar reference is to be found in the oracles of Hystaspes, whose work is only preserved through

<sup>158</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 122-134, 217, 265.

<sup>159</sup> Collins, 1994, 63.

<sup>160</sup> Collins, 1994, 64.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998a, 277f.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 273; Merkel, 2003, 1103.

<sup>163</sup> Homer, Il. 12.239; Od. 9.26.

<sup>164</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 275.

<sup>165</sup> Buitenwerf, 2004, 274 cf. Phlegon, *Mirabilia*, 3.8 (apud Lactantius, *Inst.* 7.13.11).



quotations and allusions.<sup>166</sup> Collins, on the other hand, interprets the Asian king as a traditional enemy of Egypt, like the Hyksos, who were still remembered in the Hellenistic age<sup>167</sup>, or Antiochus Epiphanes which seems to be the preferable identification.<sup>168</sup> I believe it is erroneous to identify the seventh king with either the king from the sun/east or the king from Asia. Rather, the prophecy should be seen within its own light. I shall discuss this question in depth in the commentary section.

The interpretation of the references to the seventh king have somewhat reached a dead end. Therefore it is necessary to take other evidence into consideration that may shed a light on the origin of the Third Sibyl.

#### 1.4 Structure of the Third Sibylline Oracle

Structuring Sib. Or. 3 is not an easy task. As we have it, the book is a collection of oracles from different periods and probably different places. There is discontent among scholars how to divide the book. According to the majority of scholars, with the exception of Nikiprowtzky<sup>169</sup>, lines 1-92 are not part of the original Third Sibylline Oracle based on the manuscript evidence. It is obvious that lines 93-96 have no connection to lines 1-92 which has led scholars to the assumption that lines 1-92 once marked the ending of a different book, presumably book II whose beginning is recorded in fragment 1 of Theophilus.<sup>170</sup> This assumption is also based on the fact that most manuscripts introduce Sib.Or. 3 as an excerpt ‘from the second logos (λόγος) concerning God’.<sup>171</sup> The manuscripts of class  $\psi$  insert the note ‘seek the remnants of the second book and the beginning of the third’.<sup>172</sup> The proper beginning of the third book remains lost.

According to Collins, the core of the book can be found in lines 97-349 and 489-829<sup>173</sup>; I follow this division. Buitenwerf regards the remainder of the book as a unit while most scholars believe lines 350-488 to be oracles that may be from one of the ‘original’ Sibyls or at least imitate their style.<sup>174</sup> This notion is derived from the fact that the oracles in question do not contain any distinct Jewish material, such as the stress on the law or the people of God.

---

<sup>166</sup> Justin, *Apol.* 1.20.1; 44.12; Clement, *Strom.*, 6.5; 43, 1; John Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 2.4; Lactantius, *Epit.*, 71; 72; 73; Inst. 7.14.16; 7.25.1; 7.14.8-10,16-17; 7.15.19; 7.15.11; 17.16.4-8,10-14; 7.17.9-11; 18.1-3;19.5-9; 7.21.3-7; 7.24.7-9; 7.26.1

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.74-92.

<sup>168</sup> Collins, 1984, 375, note v3.

<sup>169</sup> Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 60-66.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Kurfes, 1951, 73, 287; Collins, 1984, 359; Gauger, 1998, 489.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Kurfes, 1951, 287; Collins, 1984, 359; Gauger, 1998, 489f; Buitenwerf, 2003, 65-91.

<sup>172</sup> Collins, 1984, 359.

<sup>173</sup> Collins, 2012, 188.

<sup>174</sup> Geffcken, 1902a, 13 attributes them to the Erythrean Sibyl which he derives from Lactantius who always refers to the Third Sibyl as the Erythrean Sibyl. Rather than that, a Jewish writer imitates the style of the famous Erythrean Sibyl (cf. Collins, 1974, 28).

While Buitenwerf may be going to the extreme by postulating the book is a unit, Lightfoot argues that in the oracles in question reminiscences to the prophets of the Hebrew Bible can be discerned. Most of these oracles are either anti-Hellenistic or anti-Roman. On a pure theological level they do not add anything to what can be observed from the rest of the book. It is probable that the Sibyl is trying to be more an 'original' Sibyl than in those sections where she recasts biblical material more explicitly. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss lines 350-488 in detail.<sup>175</sup>

#### **Excursus: The anti-Roman oracle in lines 350-380**

It has often been observed that the passage in lines 350-380 reflects the anti-Roman attitudes in Asia after the battle of Magnesia in 189 BCE.<sup>176</sup> Since Geffcken's translation the passage is usually dated to the Mithridatic wars.<sup>177</sup> According to Buitenwerf, Sib. Or. 3, or parts of it for that matter (especially 350-366), reflect the situation in Asia (Minor) in the wake of the First Mithridatic War (88-85 BCE). After Sulla had defeated Mithridates in Asia Minor, the rebellious cities were punished with heavy taxes.<sup>178</sup> Rome's avarice is repeatedly condemned throughout the third book so that the section is not entirely out of place.<sup>179</sup> Considering that the book is a collection as it is, it is no contradiction that the book contains anti-Macedonian as well as anti-Roman oracles from different periods. Lightfoot remarks that 'a long section consists of oracles against places in Asia Minor which may be extracted from Sibyls native to the area, or at least imitate their style'<sup>180</sup>. The anti-Roman bias is a topos on its own that is older than Jewish anti-Roman resentments.

The author not only imitates the style of the pagan Sibyls but he also adapts non-sibyllistic pagan material. Roman avarice was a theme that was carried on in Asia Minor for centuries.<sup>181</sup> The reason for the enduringness of the motif was Rome's capability of maintaining control in the Mediterranean long after the Hellenistic kingdoms the preceded Rome had faded into memories of a better past.<sup>182</sup> The popularity of the theme is also evident from the Oracle of Hystaspes which is known to us only through citations in Christian literature, most prominently by Lactantius.<sup>183</sup> The famous predication that the East will conquer the West at the hands of a king from Asia found in Lactantius is attributed to Hystaspes.<sup>184</sup> Lactantius, who quotes the Sibylline

<sup>175</sup> The lines in question are discussed in detail by Buitenwerf, 2003, 221-235.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Geffcken, 1902, 8-9; according to Buitenwerf, 2003, 222 n. 10 the oracle in line 350-55 belongs to the time of the Mithridatic Wars as it presupposes Roman dominion over Asia.

<sup>177</sup> Between 88 and 63 BCE there were three wars, named after Mithridates VI of Pontus, between the kingdom of Pontus and Rome. Eventually, Rome, under the leadership of Pompey the Great emerged victorious and Mithridates committed suicide. An extant account of the Mithridatic Wars can be found in the account of Appian (Mithridatica), Plutarch, Sull.; Luc. 20 and for modern views Magie, 1950; McGing, 1992. Collins dates the section to the time of Cleopatra which is, however, not convincing. This interpretation essentially rests on the interpretation of the δέσποινα in line 359. However, a personification of Asia is just as a likely candidate. Collins' assumption that the passage cannot be part of the remainder of the book because it deals with Asian rather than Egyptian affairs is unfounded. From what we have observed there is no particular focus on Egypt in the book at all. Cf. Collins, 1974, 57-62.

<sup>178</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 222. This has already been suggested by Kippenberg, 1984, 45ff. Cf. also Cicero, Leg. man. 4.14-19, Plutarch, Luc. 20 and Philo, spec. 3.159f.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. lines 179, 188.

<sup>180</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 224.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Sanford, 1950, 35.

<sup>182</sup> Sanford, 1950, 28.

<sup>183</sup> Justin, 1 Apol. 20.1; 44.12; Clement, Strom., 6.5; 43, 1; John Lydus, De Mensibus, 2.4; Lactantius, Epit., 71; 72; 73; Inst. 7.14.16; 7.25.1; 7.14.8-10, 16-17; 7.15.19; 7.15.11; 7.16.4-8, 10-14; 7.17.9-11; 18.1-3; 19.5-9; 7.21.3-7; 7.24.7-9; 7.26.1

<sup>184</sup> ... cuius vastitatis et confusionis haec erit causa, quod Romanum nomen, quo nunc regitur orbis - horret animus dicere, sed dicam, quia futurum est - tolletur e terra et imperium in Asiam revertetur ac rursus oriens

Oracles several times, points to the tension between East and West and how it is used in the Sibylline Oracles. The ruin of Rome was predicted and possible also the rule of the East.<sup>185</sup>

The Oracle of Hystaspes is commonly believed to be a pseudepigraphic book of Persian origin that has only survived in fragments and that was written by a pagan author sometime between the first century BCE and CE. Flusser, on the other hand, argues that the Hystaspes oracle is a Jewish pseudepigraph rather than a Persian one.<sup>186</sup> If so, the oracle would indeed be closer to the Sibylline Oracles than scholars had previously thought. Lightfoot holds serious reservations against Flusser's claim though.<sup>187</sup> Be that as it may, the Sibyl as well as Hystaspes are closely related to apocalypses wherefore Justin<sup>188</sup> and Clement<sup>189</sup> couple them in that way.

However, in Lactantius' further account it seems that the ruin of Rome will only be the beginning of the eschatological age. This can be explained by the fact that Lactantius is eager to harmonise the oracle of Hystaspes with Christian tradition of the Antichrist.<sup>190</sup> It is likely that Lactantius himself is responsible for that amalgamation.<sup>191</sup> In the original oracle of Hystaspes, the Asian king would have assumed the role that Lactantius attributes to the king from the north. Hystaspes's oracle about dominion returning to Asia was transformed by Zoroastrianism and has turned into specific Iranian tradition.<sup>192</sup>

Kurfeß identified a possible reference to the oracle in Phlegon's *mirabilia*<sup>193</sup> that speaks of the return of world dominion to Asia.<sup>194</sup> However, none of these references point specifically to Mithridates.<sup>195</sup> Gauger also notes a correspondence between Phlegon's *mirabilia*<sup>196</sup> and the Sibylline Oracles.<sup>197</sup> In Phlegon's *mirabilia* the return of Rome's wealth and her captured slaves to Asia is foretold by a scared Roman general. According to Sanford the oracle originally derives from the time of the Syrian Wars (third/second century BCE).<sup>198</sup> In the Near East, prophecy of doom was a common reaction towards the impelling of Hellenisms.<sup>199</sup> Eddy labels this phenomenon 'oracular opposition'<sup>200</sup>. It should be noted though that Eddy's idea of a pan-oriental anti-

dominabitur atque occidens seruiet. (This will be the cause of the destruction and confusion, that the Roman name, by which the world is now ruled - the mind fears to say it, but I will say it, because it will be - will be returned to Asia, and again the Orient will dominate and the Occident will serve). Lactantius, Inst. 7.15.11.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Lactantius, Inst. 15.11.18. Kocsis, 1962 has already pointed out the topic in the Sibylline Oracles.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 80.

<sup>187</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to engage in this discussion. Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 80 n. 115-116.

<sup>188</sup> Justin, 1 Apol. 20.

<sup>189</sup> Clement, Strom. 6.5.

<sup>190</sup> After the destruction and confusion (*vastitatis et confusionis*) there will be civil war and ten kings will divide the earth among themselves. The king from the north will be the strongest and subdue the other nine, including three kings from Asia. The northern king will bring tyranny and death to mankind. This view derives from the commentaries on the Book of Daniel by Hippolytos and Ireneus. According to chapters 2, 7 and 11 of Daniel the Roman empire will be divided among ten kings (Dan 2:33-41; 7:7 cf. Apc 17:3.12) and three of these (Dan 11:43) will fall prey to the Antichrist who is coming from the North (Dan 11:40). Another tradition must have been that an Asian king would overthrow Rome and return power to the east. Due to that amalgam Lactantius mentions three Asian kings (instead of the Egyptian, Lydian and Ethiopian king in Daniel) who will be overthrown by the king from the north who in turn will become the new master of the East (Lactantius, Inst. 7.16.3).

<sup>191</sup> Fuchs, 1968, 33.

<sup>192</sup> Kippenberg, 1984, 43.

<sup>193</sup> apud Lactantius, Inst. 7.13.11. Recent edition: Kai Brodersen, ed., *Das Buch der Wunder: und Zeugnisse seiner Wirkungsgeschichte* (Texte zur Forschung 79; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002).

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Kurfeß, 1951, 294. Similar prodigies can be found in Tacitus (Hist. 5.13), Sueton (Vesp. 4) and in Josephus (B.J. 6.3).

<sup>195</sup> Gauger, 1998, 496.

<sup>196</sup> FGH 257, F 36 III.

<sup>197</sup> Gauger 1995, 57.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. Sanford, 1950, 30.

<sup>199</sup> Such as the Bahman Yasht in Persia and the Oracle of Hystaspes, the Potter's Oracle in Egypt and of course the Book of Daniel in Judah. Cf. Eddy, 1961, 334ff. 'The master hope of the Hellenistic period was for a return of native kingship' (Eddy, 1961, 330).

<sup>200</sup> Eddy, 1961.

Hellenism is a bit of a generalisation and needs to be revised especially in light of the Egyptian evidence that has been uncovered since.<sup>201</sup> In his account of the Jewish War, Tacitus speaks of a prophecy that circulated among the Jews predicting the return of power to the East and a king coming from Judea.<sup>202</sup> A similar prediction can be found in Josephus' account.<sup>203</sup>

It has been suggested that line 350-80 have no Jewish elements to them and are nothing but a copy of a pre-existing oracle. However, scholars have also observed that stylistically the passage is close to the judicial speeches and woe-oracles of the Old Testament prophets.<sup>204</sup> According to Aune, the oracle is similar to the prophecy of the downfall of Babylon (=Rome) in Rev 18:21-24 – where Babylon is addressed in the second person in verses 22-23, while the third person in verses 21 and 24 frame the section.<sup>205</sup> These similarities to Rev 18 are noteworthy.<sup>206</sup>

The decisive question is as to why the compiler of the Third Sibyl decided to include this oracle here. It is probable that he was under the impression of Roman dominion in the eastern Mediterranean. The Mithridatic Wars certainly are a *terminus ante quem* for the oracle in question. However, the focus on Asia also reflects the Sibyls local to the area and the image of the Sibyl as a wanderer so that the oracles in lines 350-488 may very well be later redactional additions.

Scholars other than Buitenwerf and Lightfoot commonly distinguish three stages (see: History of research for details):

The main corpus (93-349 and 489-829)

Oracles against various nations (350-488)

1-96 as a beginning of another book (probably book two)

Line 776 is commonly regarded as a Christian interpolation. In addition to that, line 328, dealing with the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 CE, must be seen as a later addition. The chunk of Sib. Or. 3 in its present state was probably redacted by the middle of the first century BCE.

It needs to be kept in mind that the book is a collection of oracles by its very nature. The book is certainly not a unit but considering that it is a collection it has to be analysed as a whole and not by its individual parts.

The book can be subdivided by the introduction formulae in lines 162-165, 196-198, 295-300, and 489-491 respectively. This is the most sensible solution as it is the structure that the book itself gives us. According to that, the book can be divided into the following five sections.

---

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Schipper/Blasius, 2006, 295-302. See also the discussion on the Cologne Papyrus (comments on 608-623).

<sup>202</sup> ... quae pauci in metum trahebant: pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens profectique Iudaea rerum potirentur... (Tacitus, Hist. 5.13).

<sup>203</sup> But now, what did the most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how," about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea. However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand (Josephus, B.J. 6.312-314, Thackeray, LCL).

<sup>204</sup> Aune, 1983, 75; Lightfoot, 2007, 224.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Aune, 1983, 75.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Rev 18:6-7.

(0. Now lost beginning)

I. 93-161

II. 162-195

III. 196-294

IV. 295-488

V. 489-829

The individual sections reveal a recurring pattern; judgement and punishment are the results of sin and disobedience to God. The basic sin – be it of the nations or the people of God – is idolatry. The Sibyl therefore condemns and admonishes the nations to turn to God in order to be saved from his judgement. It is thereby the task of the people of God to be moral guides for the nations, since they possess the law of God.

This sin-punishment pattern serves as an element that structures the text. In section I the Tower of Babel is destroyed and men are dispersed because of their arrogance, after that the Titans mark the beginning of the first war until they are destroyed by God. The Titans are represented as nothing but deified mortal kings. Because they fought over who should have world dominion, they were destroyed by God. They first brought war unto mankind. The subject of war is continued throughout the book and is repeatedly condemned. In section II the Greeks and Romans will bring all kinds of woes upon the people because of which they will eventually be destroyed. In section III the people are led to Babylon in captivity because they did not obey the law of God. In section IV the Greeks are in danger because of their idolatry and are contrasted with the people of God. Eventually the Sibyl admonishes the Greeks to abandon their ways and heed the law of God. Those who turn to God and obey his law will be exempt from judgment. Then God will establish his divine dominion for all people, i.e. those who have converted.

The introduction formula is one of the literary devices that the author uses to mark the beginning of a new section. Similar formulas can be found in the prophets or the Apocalypse of John. The Sibyl's break-off and resumption draws eclectically on topoi associated with bards and the Muses in early Greek hexameter poetry, and with poetic and oracular inspiration in Plato.<sup>207</sup> The formula in 295-299 and the shorter version in 489-491 divide significantly different sections from other oracles. The phenomenon is paralleled in Sib 2.1-5 which is probably modelled on the formulae in book 3.<sup>208</sup>

Lines 93-161 have to be divided separately as the beginning of the book has been lost. However, the original beginning probably had an introduction formula as well. It is important

---

<sup>207</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 443.

<sup>208</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 443.

to note that because section I contains accounts of primeval history it is narrated in the aorist and imperfect. Only in section II the Sibyl switches to the future tense. Being a relative of Noah (827), the Sibyl must have lived some time after the flood. This timeframe has to be taken as reference frame for her point of view and is not to be confused with the authors own timeframe. The author wrote at a time when Rome was already the current dominion in the Mediterranean. This is evident from the mentioning of Rome as the last in a chain of Empires.<sup>209</sup>

Another literary device is the usage of conjunctions such as ὁπότε, πότε, τότε, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα etc. In Sib. Or. 3 the phrase καὶ τότε + future tense is used to separate one event from another so that it usually introduces a new period.<sup>210</sup> However, due to the collective character of the book, it is not always possible to find a precise chronological progression within the oracles. Particularly at the end of the book a lot of things happen at once. Some scholars have tried to narrow those events down to a chronological timeline but this introduces far too many inconsistencies. Rather, this lack of chronological narrative should be regarded as a stylistic device of the Sibyl. This will be explained in detail in the according commentary section.

While the first half of the book is mainly structured by the introduction formulae, the second half of the book, beginning in line 489, is structured by these admonitions. They occur in lines 545-572, 624-651, 732-740, and 762-766. Three out of four are directly addressed at Greece, only the fourth lacks a direct addressee. Whereas in the other three Greece is the fictional addressee of the book, the Sibyl departs from this structure at the end. Chances are that the author wanted to make clear that the Sibyl's prophecies concern all people now that the book draws to its conclusion. The admonitions structure the sequence of weal and woe. They are to signify that not only the people of God will be saved but that all people can be provided they turn to God and his law. They discontinue the predictions about judgement on the one hand and the Golden Age on the other.

---

<sup>209</sup> It has been argued by Collins that lines 97-161 stand apart from the remainder of the book and serve as an introduction. To Collins, section I is of particular importance as it contains the reference to the seventh king in lines 192-93 (Collins, 1984, 354). Geffcken, on the other hand, puts lines 194-195 in brackets, thus avoiding the problem of the status of the Jews altogether. Buitenwerf argues that 'the surviving parts of the book can and should be seen as a literary unit' (Buitenwerf, 2003, 124). The book contained (at least) 93-829 and probably fr. i and iii but not 1-92. Buitenwerf suggested that the fragments formed the now lost beginning of the Third Sibyl. However, this will not be discussed in this study.

<sup>210</sup> Sib. Or. 3 uses καὶ τότε δὴ to refer to 'at that very time' i.e. an event that happens at the same time as another in line 287. However, in her account of primeval history, which is narrated in the past tense, καὶ τότε was used to signify events that happened after another event was concluded. Only when the Sibyl switches to the future tense from line 166 onwards καὶ τότε (+ verb in the future tense) refers to future events accordingly (beginning in line 194).

With these criteria in mind, the book can be divided as follows<sup>211</sup>:

Section I: lines 93-161

93-96 Fragmentary oracle about the deluge

97-107 The tower of Babel

107-158a Titanomachy (καὶ τότε δὴ + aorist)

156-158a The end of the Titans (καὶ τότε δὴ + aorist)

158b-161 The world empires: the beginning of universal history (αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα)

The kingdom of Egypt rose up, next that of the Persians, the Medes, the Ethiopians and that of Assyria Babylon, then that of the Macedonians, that of Egypt again, then of Rome.

Section II: lines 162-195

162-164 Introduction formula<sup>212</sup>

165-195 History from the reign of Solomon to the fall of the Roman Empire

167-170 The kingdom of Solomon (switch to future tense)

170-174 Macedonian reign, shift towards a negative assessment of rule (αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα + future tense)

175-191 The Macedonians will be destroyed by the kingdom from the western sea, i.e. the Romans (αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα + future tense)<sup>213</sup>

192-195 the seventh king of Egypt and the role of the people of God (καὶ τότε + future)

Section III: lines 196-294

196-198 Introduction of a new prophecy

199-212 Oracles against various nations

213-217 Oracles against the people of God

218-264 Praise of the people of God, they live righteously because they obey the law which they will receive on Mount Sinai

265-294 Exile and restoration, forsaking the law leads to judgment while adhering to it leads to salvation<sup>214</sup>

286-294 God will send a king from heaven (Cyrus), the temple will be restored (καὶ τότε δὴ + future tense)

Section IV: lines 295-488

295-299 Introduction of a new prophecy

---

<sup>211</sup> My structure is based on the one laid out by Buitenwerf, 2003, 137-143. Other than him, I don't take the fragments into account, which he takes as the original beginning of the book. Other details differ where I've taken person changes and conjunctions into account as can be seen from the notes below.

<sup>212</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 140 includes lines 165-66 into the introduction.

<sup>213</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 140 takes lines 192-93 as belonging to this section.

<sup>214</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 141 treats lines 265-281 as one section.

- 300-313 Oracles against the Babylonians for destroying the temple
- 314-318 An oracle against Egypt (in the seventh generation, then it will have rest),
- 319-323 Gog and Magog, Libya
- 324-336 The daughters of the West (Rome) will be punished for destroying the temple
- 337-349 A star in the west is a sign for distress, many cities in Europe, Asia and Egypt will be destroyed (Roman expansion)
- 350-356 Rome will have to pay Asia back
- 356-366 Another oracle against Rome (Rome addressed in the second person)
- 367-380 Asia will have a peaceful period
- 381-387 The Macedonian conquest
- 388-400 The man in the purple cloak, the ten horns
- 401-488 Oracles against Phrygia and Troy, the Trojan War, the liar poet Homer, oracles concerning various cities and regions, most of them in Asia Minor
- Section V: lines 489-600
- 489-491 Introduction of a new prophecy
- 492-544 Oracles against various nations
- 545-572 Admonition of Greece (ἀσεβῶν γένος ἀνδρῶν) to supplicate to God and the law (second person)
- 573-600 Praise of the people of God (third person)
- Section VI: lines 601-701
- 601-607 Punishment of the idol worshippers
- 608-623 The seventh king of Egypt and the king from Asia
- 619-623 A peaceful period (καὶ τότε + future tense)
- 624-651 Admonition (second person)
- 652-656 The king from the east (καὶ τότε + future tense)
- 657-668 Völkersturm
- 669-697 Divine intervention and cosmic judgement
- 698-701 Conclusion of the Sibyl
- Section VII: lines 702-766
- 702-715 The sons of God
- 716-731 The entire world will recognise God's power (hymn)
- 732-740 Admonition of Greece (second person)
- 741-743 Judgement of the world (third person)
- 744-761 The Golden Age
- 757-761 The establishment of a common law



762-766 Admonition of the reader (second person)

Section VIII: Lines 767-897

767-808 The divine βασιλῆιον and the transformation of the tripartite world and divided kingdoms into a utopian kingdom (καὶ τότε δὴ + future tense)

769-771 The gates of the blessed

772-776 Universal pilgrimage to the house of God

777-779 The way of God, preparing the divine dominion

780-784 Eternal peace and righteous wealth

785-795 The maiden (second person)

796-808 The end of war

Epilogue: 809-829 Conclusion of the Sibyl

Based on this general outline the images of space in the Third Sibylline Oracle shall be analysed.<sup>215</sup> Detailed structural remarks can be found in the individual commentary section.

---

<sup>215</sup> Note that it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss every section in detail. I will focus on the ones relevant for the assessment of the images of space in the Third Sibyl.

## 1.5 Spatial theories and biblical scholarship

### 1.5.1 Images of Space

In order to analyse the Sibyl's images of space, we need to establish first what the terms "image" and "space" mean. When I speak of the Sibyl's images of space, "image" can mean two things, both of which we find in Sib. Or. 3. The first meaning is an image as representation of a person or a thing in physical or mental form. With regard to Sib. Or. 3, the author represents geographical places by describing and mapping them. The second meaning is image in terms of an idea or metaphor. In Sib. Or. 3 the author develops his own ideas when he idealises space or speaks of space other than it is in reality or in the present. Space is then represented as an ideal for the future rather than an illustration of its present state. For instance, the world is described as a hostile place on the one hand, and is also envisaged as a paradise in the future.

### 1.5.2 Soja's Thirdspace and Foucault's Heterotopia

The 20th and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have spawned a wide range of theories on space and its construction.<sup>216</sup> Most of them are either sociological (Michel Foucault<sup>217</sup>, Henri Lefebvre<sup>218</sup>) or geographical (Edward Soja<sup>219</sup>). Scholars of different fields have realised that space is a vital and necessary category of discourse, even a historical discourse. Space has a genealogy and a history; it exists as a constructed category within the framework of human experience.<sup>220</sup>

In recent years biblical scholars have uncovered the usefulness of spatial theories for the interpretation of biblical texts. Most importantly, spatial theory has helped to rethink the biblical map.

At the heart of spatial theory lies the assumption that like history and society, space is constructed reality and as such can be theorised. Soja writes of three spaces: Firstspace (geophysical realities as perceived), Secondspace (mapped realities as represented) and Thirdspace (lived realities as practiced).<sup>221</sup> According to Soja, space is all three at once.<sup>222</sup> Soja's notion of three spaces and Thirdspace has left an impact on philosophers and geographers alike. In addition, his theories have also begun to impact biblical studies. In a summary of the current discussion of critical space theory within the AAR/SBL Seminar on

---

<sup>216</sup> An overview is provided by Kümmerling, 2010.

<sup>217</sup> Foucault, 1984, 9-17; 1986, 22-27; 2005.

<sup>218</sup> Lefebvre, 1991.

<sup>219</sup> Soja, 1996.

<sup>220</sup> Berquist, 2002, 14.

<sup>221</sup> Berquist, 2002, 20.

<sup>222</sup> Soja, 1996, 84.

Construction of Ancient Space, Claudia Camp uses the term “Firstspace”, based on the works of Henri Lefebvre and the geographer Edward Soja, to identify geographical realities as perceived by society. She labels what we consider as represented or imagined space (ideas of space) “Secondspace”. Finally, there is “Thirdspace” which is filled with politics and ideology. Thirdspaces are the spaces that are both real and imagined at the same time. ‘These [Third]spaces are... vitally filled with politics and ideology, with the real and imagined intertwined... They are the “dominated spaces,” the spaces of peripheries... They are the chosen spaces for struggle, liberation, and emancipation.’<sup>223</sup> The lived human encounter with the historical site and the realm of ideas is Thirdspace (lived space). According to Lefebvre Thirdspace is linked to ‘clandestine space, offering [...] concealed criticism of social orders and [...] utopian possibilities for social life.’<sup>224</sup> The concept of Thirdspace is not far removed from Foucault’s Heterotopia<sup>225</sup>, which is a term invented to describe spaces of “otherness”, which are neither here nor there. Whereas a utopia is an idea or a space that represents the ideal version of, for instance, society, Foucault uses the term Heterotopia to designate spaces that have more than one layer. In other words, Heterotopia is the physical representation of utopia (like the future city of Jerusalem). He uses a mirror as a metaphor to describe the two: a mirror is a metaphor for utopia because the image you see is not real. However, it is also Heterotopia because it shapes the way you relate to your own image.

It is Thirdspace that has gained the most attention from biblical scholars due to their interest in spatial theory as a mode of analysis for the socio-historical background of biblical texts. Camp notes that ‘written texts cannot simply be classified as Secondspace’<sup>226</sup>. The question whether a text is First-, Second-, or Thirdspace cannot simply be decided by the fact that it is written. The genre of the written text has to be taken into account. Apocalyptic texts, for instance, transform and reproduce ‘real’ space so that the ideal alternate reality they construct could be understood in terms of Thirdspace.<sup>227</sup> The metaphor of female Zion in Isaiah, on the other hand, can also be seen as a ‘thirdspatial’ construction of space inasmuch it ‘ground[s] lived (Thirdspatial) experience for its politically disempowered inhabitants’<sup>228</sup>. From the historian’s standpoint, the ancient city of Jerusalem can be described with Soja’s model. On the one hand, there are the archaeological remains of the ancient city which would be Firstspace (physical). On the other, there is the literary-theological account in Biblical

---

<sup>223</sup> Soja, 1996, 68.

<sup>224</sup> Camp, 2008, 9.

<sup>225</sup> Foucault, 2000.

<sup>226</sup> Camp, 2008, 8.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Camp, 2008, 13f.

<sup>228</sup> Camp, 2008, 11.

scriptures which is ‘secondspatial’ insofar as it exists in the realm of ideas and ideology (symbolic), specifically the ideology of the winners. An eschatological Jerusalem or Zechariah’s vision of the temple could be described in the terms of Thirdspace. Ulrike Bail recurs on Soja’s triad and particularly draws from the concept of Thirdspace in her analysis of the digestion of the exile and the destruction of both the temple and the city in biblical texts.<sup>229</sup> Bail also uses the concept of utopia for the reconstruction of Jerusalem in the later prophets. Bail understands these texts as utopian anti-spaces that offer alternatives to the dominating (Secondspatial) mental maps. The void that the absence of God’s presence leaves is filled with these texts that long for his return. Similarly, Christl M. Maier has used Lefbvre’s triad, perceived space, conceived space, and lived space, in her monograph “Daughter Zion, Mother Zion”.<sup>230</sup> She understands ‘perceived space’ as topographical space as it is described in the texts. ‘Conceived space’ is discussed in relation to Zion theology of the exilic period while ‘lived space’ is related to actual spatial experience which can be deduced from the biblical texts concerning Zion. The female personification of Zion transforms space and makes it possible to relocate the divine-human relationship as well as the place relations of the populace of Jerusalem.<sup>231</sup> Mark K. George, the chair of the aforementioned AAR/SBL seminar, also focuses on ‘perceived space’ but he is interested in ‘spatial practice’ in light of Lefebvre so that he interprets the tabernacle as social space that is constructed to secure the survival of the people in the exile.<sup>232</sup> In that respect he is not far removed from Bail’s study which shows that the terms First- Second- and Thirdspace or conceived, perceived and lived space are interchangeable. All three of these studies have in common that they focus on the (re)creation of lived space during and after the exile.

A different approach is offered by Michaela Geiger’s recently published “Gottesräume”.<sup>233</sup> The book deals with the concepts of space in Deuteronomy based on the spatial theory by sociologist Martina Löw<sup>234</sup> according to which space is the relational order of living beings and social goods in a place<sup>235</sup>. Geiger discusses how space is constructed through the journey from Egypt into the Promised Land. That journey is not only characterised by the physical

---

<sup>229</sup> Bail, 2004.

<sup>230</sup> Maier, 2008.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Maier, 2008, 216.

<sup>232</sup> George, 2009.

<sup>233</sup> Geiger, 2010.

<sup>234</sup> Löw, 2001.

<sup>235</sup> Like a circle of people is a place in which the people feel safe but it requires the people to constitute that place. This process is called *Spacing* (Geiger, 2010, 44). Another term utilised by Löw is *Syntheseleistung* (synthesis) which requires human cognition and imagination so that the circle is only one possible option of how to perceive the space circle (Geiger, 2010, 44).

march through the desert but by the way of life that God commands in order to possess and keep the land.

I doubt the usefulness of these theories for the textual analysis of the Third Sibyl because I find it hard to apply the categories offered to written texts such as the Third Sibylline Oracle. As we have seen, the biblical texts that have been treated in light of special theories all but deal with the relation of pre- and post-exilic Jerusalem. It is evident that the triads of Lefebvre and Soja can be applied to this topic, however, the Sibyl is a different issue. I am particularly at odds with the idea of 'lived space' (or Thirdspace) since it would be based on too many assumptions if we look for it outside the text. Being a pseudepigraph the Third Sibyl reveals little about herself or the author's lived space. Egypt or Asia Minor is just as good as any place for the origin of the book. If we look for Thirdspace inside the text it would be the lived space that the text creates. The Sibyl is little concerned with such specific spaces and their structure. With regard to the Sibyl the matter is further complicated by the fact that she draws from other texts and traditions so that her image is not genuine. While the production of Thirdspace via the daughter of Zion may be true for Isaiah, the Sibyl picks up on the tradition of the female city without the geographical connotation or without any connection to the factual city of Jerusalem for that matter. With regard to the Sibyl's *basilêion* (lines 767ff) of the end-time, utopia<sup>236</sup> seems to be the more accurate terminology over Thirdspace since the Sibyl does not produce 'lived' space outside the textual imagination.<sup>237</sup> How the Sibyl's *basilêion* impacted her readers is a different question entirely. It is also a question that is hard to answer since it is so difficult to pinpoint when and where the book originated. More importantly the Sibyl's *basilêion* may have lent inspiration to texts such as Revelation.

This leaves me with the impression that it is a vain effort to apply this theory to a text such as the Third Sibyl. One of the aims of the works of Lefebvre and Soja was to propose a change in epistemology, to regard space as more than just an empty box but rather study it as a cultural and social construct. Their main contribution is their focus on lived and experienced social practice. However, problems emerge when spatial theories are applied to biblical texts which do not reflect social realities of antiquity but rather a theological retrospective of Israel's history with God. None of these texts 'can possibly be untouched by language'<sup>238</sup>. Biblical texts, or texts written in their style such as the Third Sibyl, do not intend to map real places of the ancient world but rather their own ideological and political views on them.<sup>239</sup> In

---

<sup>236</sup> See below: Utopia.

<sup>237</sup> Contra Camp, 2008, 13f who argues that apocalyptic text produce real space outside the text.

<sup>238</sup> Lied, 2008, 15.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. Lied, 2008, 16.

texts like these space is a means to an end. Soja's theory is particularly difficult to apply to ancient texts since his examples are almost exclusively based on modern, urban cultures and that leaves me too concerned about possibly misinterpreting him – especially since he is dealing with non-textual realities. In summary, Lefebvre and Soja have in common that space is seen simultaneously as real and imagined, concrete and abstract, material and metaphorical. This is also their largest common denominator with texts such as the Third Sibylline Oracle, where the real and the imagined are always intertwined. I have my reservations whether First-, Second-, and Thirdspace are the proper terms to be applied to textual evidence. We simply do not know anything about the author's lived space let alone the Sibyl's.

Space has also been much discussed in literary criticism.<sup>240</sup> However, such studies focus on narrative theory which is fairly applicable to a text such as the Third Sibyl. This is really a question of genre because the Third Sibyl is not a narrative text so that narrative theory is hard to apply. Unlike Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings", which is a favourite example of such studies, the Sibyl does not construct a whole new world and fills it with characters and places. While Tolkien's books narrate a story and establish a setting for it, a whole world with fictional languages, the Sibyl does not narrate. To try and fit a text such as the Third Sibyl into narrative theory would be of little help and probably misleading. When the Sibyl speaks of space it functions as a setting, a sphere of action for the history that she tells. Space in the Third Sibyl can be described as relational inasmuch as it is a central question how the inhabited world, the human sphere, relates to heaven, the divine sphere.

Therefore I will rely on different terminology which I am going to establish herewith.

### 1.5.3 Space in the Third Sibyl

It is within the self-proclaimed nature of the Sibyl as a prophetess that the real and the utopian ideal, the factual and the imagined intertwine in her oracles. Spatial theory may therefore help to uncover the Sibyl's understanding of kingdom and dominion, which is one of the key themes of the book. Whereas human dominion is 'real' and physical, the divine *basiléion* is ideal and utopian.

While Firstspace and Secondspace could be applied to the Third Sibyl, Thirdspace is a term that is hardly applicable to the Third Sibyl because the Sibyl herself is fictional. Since it is within the nature of pseudepigraphic texts such as the Third Sibyl, no certain data about the author and his lifetime can be deduced. Much of what the Third Sibyl says about specific space is derived from tradition and lore so that it is impossible to deduce anything about

---

<sup>240</sup> See for example Dennerlein, 2009.

“lived space” outside the text itself. Rather than that lived space could be described in terms of fictional space, i.e. the space which the Sibyl creates.

I will try and establish a more appropriate terminology with regard to the Third Sibyl. First, there is the depicted or narrated world, i.e. geographical and historical space. That is the geographical world as the Sibyl describes and perceives it. Much of what the Sibyl knows about the world is based on either the Hebrew Bible<sup>241</sup> and the Septuagint (or the Table of Nations in particular) or on ancient geographical accounts (the orientation on the East, details about regions in Asia Minor) which do not rely on a Palestinian perspective. Within this geographical world universal history takes place. In her depiction of the geographical and historical world the Sibyl partakes in the shared knowledge of Graeco-Roman antiquity.<sup>242</sup> The primary social, geographical and historical space of the Sibyl and her compilers is the Jewish Diaspora.

A second category can be described as socio-religious space. At this point space becomes endowed with political and religious meaning. This space is constituted by the law which God ordains and the people who obey it and serve as an example for all mankind. This space is constructed by a two way movement whereby the law is the mediator: God gives the law from heaven and the people’s fate relies on keeping or forsaking it. Forsaking the law means forsaking God and vice versa. However the people act, God reacts accordingly. Backsliding leads to condemnation and faithfulness leads to blissfulness. Universal history, transitory human kingdoms, and particular history, namely that of the people of God, intertwine and culminate in the establishment of God’s *basilêion* on earth.<sup>243</sup> At this point, geographical-historical space is transformed into ideological, utopian space. The Sibyl heralds the end of history with eschatological splendour – nature will be transformed, there will be one common law that applies to all people, there will be no more dangers or physical obstacles in nature, wolves will graze with lambs, and the earth will be fruitful perpetually. These images are essentially drawn from Isaiah 11 and exhibit the Sibyl’s debt to biblical tradition.<sup>244</sup> The Sibyl utilises ‘the idealised spatial language of universal dominion’<sup>245</sup>. It signifies the return to innocence and connection to God. This connection has been broken by the wicked and the backsliders wherefore they will not partake in the *basilêion*. It is decisive to understand that

---

<sup>241</sup> While it is almost certain that the Sibyl’s bible was the LXX she seems to refer to traditions preserved only by MT occasionally.

<sup>242</sup> For example in her depiction of the Titan War or the geographical outline and alignment of the world.

<sup>243</sup> Cf. Line 767ff and comments there.

<sup>244</sup> Scholars have long observed a closeness to Virgil’s fourth Eclogue. However, the Eclogue is more of an interpretation of Sibylline prophecy, or rather, of a certain kind of Sibylline prophecy (Lightfoot, 2007, 192).

<sup>245</sup> Camp, 2002, 74.

this divine *basilêion* will not be in heaven but on earth. It is this world that will be transformed into the ideal, utopian.

The *basilêion* has no territorial boundaries; it is not limited to the city of Jerusalem or the land of Israel for that matter. Rather than that the entire world will be transformed which is in fact a novelty compared to the particularistic expectations of texts from the Hebrew Bible and the Second Temple period in general that transpired into the NT texts.<sup>246</sup> The land or people of Israel are not mentioned in the entire book. There is little reference to the land. The people are referred to as the people of God or as pious, which are moral categories rather than ethnic ones. By omitting any reference to their ethnicity as well as to election, the text is clandestine about who the pious people of God are. Not every Jew is per se part of the group of righteous people. Their relation to God is defined by the law.

The transformation of geographical-historical space will happen through divine intervention and through observation of the divine will (the law) on the part of the people. The transformed world and the divine *basilêion* constitute the ideal, utopian space. The temple, as it is depicted by the Sibyl, also belongs in the category of the ideal and utopian. Like the law, it sets men in relation to God. The Sibyl gives neither a description of where it is nor of what it looks like. The temple is completely within the realm of the imagined; the Sibyl's temple is imaginary. It is safe to assume that neither the author nor Sibyl has seen the temple nor worshipped in it.<sup>247</sup> Whatever detail is mentioned about the temple or the cult is evidently drawn from the LXX. The Sibyl's temple is purely fictional based on the data she has from the holy texts. Her temple is created as an ideal space over against the corrupt world of the idolaters as she envisages and constructs it. The temple is the only and the ideal place of worship and a symbol<sup>248</sup> of God's sovereignty. As such it is somewhere and yet everywhere. The ideal, utopian *basilêion* of the end time is a metaphor for God's perpetual presence. Up until the establishment of the *basilêion* God dwells in heaven and acts from there.<sup>249</sup>

---

<sup>246</sup> Although the "new Israel" is no longer an ethnic community.

<sup>247</sup> The Sibyl being a pagan evidently has not.

<sup>248</sup> By 'symbol' I mean 'Something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation); esp. a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality, or condition' ("Symbol, N.1." OED. Oxford: University Press, 1999. Cited 17 September 2013. Online: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/196197>).

<sup>249</sup> See Part III: The Image of God.



### 1.5.4 The vertical and horizontal lines in the Third Sibyl

The Sibyl's imagined world can be described in terms of two lines, a vertical and a horizontal line. The two-way movement, the giving of the law on part of God and adhering to it on part of the people, can be described in terms of a vertical line with God on top, the law (and the temple) as mediator, and the people at the bottom. The vertical line is reciprocal inasmuch as God punishes or redeems those who are either faithful or led astray. The tower of Babel, that was built by men because they wanted to go up into heaven, is a violation of the fixed border between human and divine and an assault against God. Therefore the tower is destroyed and men are dispersed. However, God also forgives those who turn back to him wherefore condemnation is not an absolute. The interaction and reciprocity between men and God is expressed via 'the vertical heaven to earth, earth to heaven imagery'<sup>250</sup>. The verticality of the temple and the law are repeatedly expressed. They are what put men in relation to God. The Tower of Babel, on the other hand, is offensive to God and alienates men from God. Access to heaven is only available to those who have a special relation to God via the law and the temple.<sup>251</sup> The temple is the only authorised place of worship to which all people will make pilgrimage in the eschaton and accept God's sovereignty. The temple itself is a metaphor for God's sovereignty. Curiously enough the mediation of a priest is not required in order to sacrifice in the temple. The temple in the Third Sibyl is not that of the so-called priestly writings, the priestly code (Lev 1-16; 27) and the holiness code (Lev 17-26) of the Hebrew Bible, where only priests are eligible to enter the sanctuary and sacrifice on behalf of the people. The way the Sibyl describes the temple resembles that of prophets such as Zachariah or where the temple is described in utopian terms. In Ezekiel's second temple vision (Ezek 40-48) a detailed description of a new temple can be found. Ezekiel's detailed description of the future temple can be and has been understood as a blueprint for a temple to be built. However, Ezekiel's vision does not match the actual Second Temple. The core of Ezek 40-48 can be dated to the exilic period while the overall composition dates to the post-exilic period.<sup>252</sup> By the time the Second Temple was built, Ezekiel's prophecy was at risk of being considered false<sup>253</sup> because his vision did not match the actual temple. Thus, Ezek 38-39 (Gog and Magog) was inserted before the second vision giving it an eschatological outlook so that it could be read as a critique of the Second Temple and its cult. In light of Ezek 38-39

---

<sup>250</sup> Camp, 2002, 76.

<sup>251</sup> There is no description of ascension into heaven. However, when God establishes his *basilêion* the Gates of the Blessed (i.e. the gates of heaven) will be opened up for the pious. See my comments on lines 767ff.

<sup>252</sup> Konkel, 2002, 174.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Deut 18:21f.

the vision no longer describes the temple that was to be built after the return from the exile but rather an ideal or utopian temple that was to be established at the end of days.<sup>254</sup>

According to Liss, on the other hand, Ezekiel's temple was never meant to be built to begin with.<sup>255</sup> God tells Ezekiel to describe the temple rather than to build it (Ezek 43:10). Thus the authors of Ezek 40-43\* describe a temple that was never built and was never supposed to be built.<sup>256</sup> The temple is a utopia both on the factual and on the literary level.<sup>257</sup> The priestly authors of Ezek 40-43 prototypically acquire their new task in the figure of Ezekiel, namely the instruction of Tora.<sup>258</sup>

The Sibyl's temple is not constructed with 'horizontal language'<sup>259</sup> – there is no blueprint or map of the temple's location or interior. However, its function is horizontal as it is a symbol for the right cult and God's sovereignty accordingly.

Geographical-historical space can accordingly be described in terms of a horizontal line that is aligned from east to west much like the diaphragm in ancient geographical accounts<sup>260</sup> and moves for the most part in chronological order in terms of narration<sup>261</sup>. The horizontal line is not reciprocal. It is the factual line of real geographical space and the history that constitutes it. It is the realm in which humans interact, the realm of transitory kingdoms and war. However, it is constantly met with the vertical line inasmuch God intervenes in history. The building of the Tower of Babel in the beginning of the book causes God to intervene and disperse mankind. This marks the beginning of divided kingdoms. Through the Titan War the claim to world dominion and war were brought into the world. The two lines are joined when God establishes his *basilêion* on earth, all war is put to an end and the world is transformed into an ideal, utopian place. This *basilêion* is perpetual in contrast to the transitory kingdoms of men. The *basilêion* is a metaphor for God's everlasting presence and uncontested dominion on earth. Control and dominion of space are restricted to God. The horizontal line is often met with divine actions. God can put kingdoms to an end or cause natural disasters. To the Sibyl, the uncontested dominion of God is the primary mechanism of control.

Collins claims that there is no vertical [line] in the Sib. Or. According to Collins 'the supporting framework is all on the horizontal [line]: the authority of the Sibyl, the allusions to

---

<sup>254</sup> Konkel, 2002, 175.

<sup>255</sup> Liss, 2006, 141-143.

<sup>256</sup> Liss, 2006, 142.

<sup>257</sup> Liss, 2006, 143.

<sup>258</sup> Liss, 2006, 143.

<sup>259</sup> Camp, 2002, 77.

<sup>260</sup> See: Ancient Geography.

<sup>261</sup> Cf. Camp, 2002, 72 who applies the "horizontal line" to Sirach.

historical events, and the expectation of a kingdom'<sup>262</sup> (*basilêion*). While it is indeed true that there is no reference to demons and no judgement of the dead, it cannot be held that there is no vertical line. The “mythical dimension of the apocalypses” is absent from the Sibylline Oracles because they are no apocalypses. However, if we understand vertical as the acts of God in heaven with regard to earth then it is clearly there. The vertical line is fulfilled via the establishment of the divine *basilêion* on earth and God’s dwelling in it.

While the horizontal and vertical lines structure space in the Third Sibyl, space is also demarcated. There is a strong segregation between divine and human space. Although the vertical line allows men to enter into relations with God it has borders which are not to be violated. The tower of Babel is a transgression of that fixed border. In ancient near eastern and Greek cosmology vertical and horizontal are polarised.<sup>263</sup> While heaven is on high, the underworld is in the depth. The middle of these two poles is earth. Height and depth are equally important to maintain equilibrium. In the Sibyl, there is no particular concept of underworld. However, in the Sibyl there is an equilibrium between bottom (earth) and top (heaven) that can be upset through the hubris of men (the building of the tower of Babel). The border between the human and the divine is ultimately nullified when God manifests his dominion on earth.

Another term that can and should be applied to concepts found in the Third Sibyl is Utopia or utopian. The world as she describes it towards the end of the book is utopian. It is the ideal, utopian version of this world that at the end of days will be governed by God alone. It is the positive version of the Sibyl’s reality, a world without war in which everyone will observe the divine law. The Sibyl’s rendition of the ideal future world is full of images borrowed from the biblical scriptures and classical utopias. At the end of the book, space is redefined in utopian terms and the horizontal demarcation of space is nullified. A detailed analysis of relevant passages shall be provided.

---

<sup>262</sup> Collins, 1998, 125.

<sup>263</sup> Jooß, 2005, 181.

## 1.6 Utopias in classical and biblical texts

### 1.6.1 Introduction

Space in the Third Sibyl can be described in terms of Utopia. Modern studies on Utopia are usually based on Thomas Moore's novel *Utopia*<sup>264</sup> (1516 in Latin, 1551 in English) in which the protagonist Hythloday ("Nonsense") describes the political arrangements of 'Utopia' ('Nowheria'), a remote fictional island. In the novel, the island of Utopia is an ideal world over against sixteenth century England as Moore portrays it. Much of what he says about Utopia's ideal society is based on Biblical data or on the political utopias of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero.

The word itself is of Greek origin and was, most likely, used because of its meaning. However, its meaning is not perfectly clear, it is both 'good place' (*eutopia*) and 'no place' (*outopia*). Utopia is a place that is idealised and does not exist in reality.<sup>265</sup> Utopia can mean fantastic, unrealisable but also ideal, visionary, better-than-the-present, and alternative reality so that utopia does not necessarily have to describe the future and is hence not identical to what is commonly called eschatology.<sup>266</sup> Utopia can exist in the present just like Moore's island of Utopia does. Although many of the utopian concepts in the Bible and related literature are eschatological it does not follow that there is an equation of eschatology and utopia.<sup>267</sup> These idealised futures are modelled on ideals of the past such as the Garden of Eden in the Hebrew Bible or the Golden Age in the works of Hesiod.

In his spatial analysis on Moore's *Utopia*, Marin claims that Utopia is not 'no place' but rather 'the other of any place' as opposed to a place that does not exist.<sup>268</sup> Utopia is dialogue with *spatial representation*<sup>269</sup> but also resists exact representation on a map because it is to be striven after and never completely reached. This is also echoed in a famous quote by Oscar Wilde from 1891: 'A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth looking at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias...'<sup>270</sup> Marin concludes that 'Utopia is an ideological critique of ideology'<sup>271</sup>. Contrary to Marin, Geus has stressed the importance of locating utopia on the

---

<sup>264</sup> Moore, 1995. Older editions can be found online at: <http://openlibrary.org/works/OL1090237W/Utopia>

<sup>265</sup> Schweitzer, 2006, 14.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. Schweitzer, 2006, 15. See also the essays in Ben Zvi, 2006.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Schweitzer, 2006, 15.

<sup>268</sup> Marin, 1993, 11.

<sup>269</sup> Schweitzer, 2006, 21.

<sup>270</sup> Wilde, 1997, 42.

<sup>271</sup> Marin, 1984, 195.

map of the ancient Greek world.<sup>272</sup> He demonstrates that the spatiality of utopia plays a significant role in its depiction and in its relationship to the cultural ideals of the day. The image of utopia as a space derives from its connotation as ‘good place’ rather than its ‘no place’, i.e. without space.<sup>273</sup> To conclude, Utopia in present literary theory functions as a rejection of the status quo rather than as a blueprint to be realised in the future.<sup>274</sup> We shall see that the Third Sibyl fits this description through her condemnation of the ways of the nations and their political claims over against the merits of the people of God who serve as an example for all mankind. In an undisclosed future, God will establish his eternal dominion on earth and transform the world into a place void of war and tribulation.

Dawson differentiated three types of utopian genres in Ancient Greek literature:<sup>275</sup>

1. Literary adaptations of myths and legends, such as the golden age or the Elysian fields, mythological history and geography as well as messianic works<sup>276</sup>.

2. political utopias, divided in two sub-genres:

2.1 “Low” utopianism: philosophical works on politics that propose an ideal polis to be put into practice if possible (Plato’s *Law*, Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Republic*, or Cicero’s *Laws*).

2.2 “High” utopianism: philosophical works on politics that propose an ideal polis not to be realised but rather as an example for political reform such as Plato’s *Republic*.

This typology has been taken up by Beavis in her analysis of the kingdom of God as utopia in the New Testament.<sup>277</sup> We shall see through the course of the book that the Sibyl’s image of the establishment of the divine dominion belongs in the first category while her image of the law can be defined by the second.

## 1.6.2 Classical and Hellenistic Utopias

### 1.6.2.1 The Golden Age of Cronus

The oldest extant account of a mythical utopia in Greek tradition can be found in Hesiod’s *Opera et Dies* (Works and Days). In Hesiod’s Works and Days the age of Cronus is represented as the Golden Age.<sup>278</sup> According to Hesiod the gods and humanity sprang from the same source.<sup>279</sup> The Olympian gods created the first human race, the golden race, which lived in a Golden Age ruled by the Titan Cronus. The first generation of men lived in fertility,

---

<sup>272</sup> Cf. Geus, 2000, 55-90.

<sup>273</sup> Schweitzer, 2006, 21.

<sup>274</sup> Schweitzer, 2006, 23.

<sup>275</sup> Dawson, 1992, 7.

<sup>276</sup> Dawson does not specify which Greek works he defines as messianic.

<sup>277</sup> Beavis, 2006.

<sup>278</sup> Hesiod, Op. 106-200.

<sup>279</sup> Hesiod, Op. 108.

rich in flock and loved by the blessed gods.<sup>280</sup> Abundant fertility is a feature that is familiar from biblical visions of the Promised Land or future Jerusalem. The subsequent generation of men, the silver age, was far less noble than their ancestors.<sup>281</sup> They were inclined to sinfulness and impiety. Zeus, a son of Cronus, was the divine father of the third, brazen race which was ultimately destroyed by its own violence.<sup>282</sup> Hesiod's account includes a fourth, heroic generation of demigods, more righteous and nobler than the brazen race.<sup>283</sup> Some of these heroes did not die but were granted eternal life by Zeus, who is a son of Cronus, on the Islands of the Blessed (see below). The fifth age, the Iron Age, is the most unfortunate and is that of Hesiod's time.<sup>284</sup>

The concept of different ages is also common in Judeo-Christian literature. In the Book of Daniel the more common sequence of four ages (golden, silver, bronze, and iron) is reflected in the empire scheme. According to Daniel, these four ages will be succeeded by the uncontested and perpetual divine kingdom (Dan 2:31-44). In the first century BCE Virgil, citing the Cumaean Sibyl, announced the new Golden Age to be initiated by the birth of a prodigy child.<sup>285</sup> The later Sibylline Oracles divide history into ten periods.<sup>286</sup> Initially an ideal of the past, the Golden Age was later transformed into an eschatological concept.<sup>287</sup> Gatz spoke of the return of the Golden Age<sup>288</sup> and named the Sibyl as a source for this development. However, Waßmuth has argued conclusively that (except for Sib. Or. 3) the evidence predates Virgil's Eclogue and that the Sibylline Oracles were inspired by Jewish eschatology in their renditions of the future Golden Age.<sup>289</sup> However, with regard to the Third Sibyl some of the images related to the Golden Age can be located in the past or present because they describe the conditions of the people of God and God's benevolence towards them.<sup>290</sup> Whether there was a Golden Age in the past (such as in the Garden of Eden) in the Third Sibyl cannot be determined as the beginning of the book is lost. With regard to the First and Second Sibyl there is no such protological counterpart.<sup>291</sup>

---

<sup>280</sup> Hesiod, Op. 115-120.

<sup>281</sup> Hesiod, Op. 130-149.

<sup>282</sup> Hesiod, Op. 145-155.

<sup>283</sup> Hesiod, Op. 160-70.

<sup>284</sup> Hesiod, Op. 174-200.

<sup>285</sup> Virgil, Ecl. 4.

<sup>286</sup> Cf. Collins, 1984, 354.

<sup>287</sup> Aristototele, Ath. pol. 16.7; Virgil, Ecl. 4; For further reading see: Gatz, 1967.

<sup>288</sup> Gatz, 1967, 90-97.

<sup>289</sup> Cf. Waßmuth, 2010, 167f.

<sup>290</sup> See for instance line 261-264.

<sup>291</sup> Cf. Waßmuth, 2010, 168.

### 1.6.2.2 The Isles of the Blessed

Whereas Hesiod's Day and Age describes a Golden Age of the past, Greek mythology also knows a future Utopia. A paradise for heroes, Elysion (Ἠλύσιον), is only attested once in Homer<sup>292</sup> where Proteus tells Menelaus that he will not die but that the gods will send him to a place (Elysion) with perfect climate at the end of the earth. Eschatology became increasingly more important after Homer. In Hesiod's Opera the place that heroes rest in is called the Isles of the Blessed (μακάρων νῆσοι), which corresponds to the Homeric Elysion in terms of its features. Elysion eventually became a place on the Isles of the Blessed, the Elysian Fields.<sup>293</sup> Initially, the Isles of the Blessed were reserved for a select few, demigods and heroes. Eventually, they turned into a paradise for all righteous.<sup>294</sup> In Hesiod's version of the myth, Cronus became the ruler of the Islands of the Blessed when he was superseded by his son Zeus.<sup>295</sup>

Like Mount Olympus (or Hades for that matter) the Isles of the Blessed were located on the ancient map. Homer locates the Elysian Fields on the western margin of the earth. Hesiod, on the other hand, refers to the Isles of the Blessed in the Western Ocean.<sup>296</sup> When the map of the world was shaped by the travels of the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, the Isles of the blessed were identified with Maderia and Porto Santo.<sup>297</sup> Pliny identified them with the Canary Islands.<sup>298</sup> Plutarch and Pliny describe the Isles as particularly climatically favoured.

### 1.6.3 Utopias in biblical texts<sup>299</sup>

The closest biblical analogy to the idea of utopia in its strict sense as *outopos* (no place) is the Garden of Eden in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>300</sup> Furthermore, there are numerous descriptions of an idealised Israel. Phrases like 'the promised land' or 'land of milk and honey' go hand in hand with images of abundance and fertility.<sup>301</sup> The images of the Garden of Eden and the

<sup>292</sup> Homer, Od. 4.561-69.

<sup>293</sup> Lucian, Jupp. conf. 17; Ver. hist. 2.6-14.

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Strabo, Geogr. 3.2.13.32; in Plato, Gorg. 524a: behind the meadow where the dead come for judgement one road leads to the Isles of the Blessed and the other to Tartarus, in Virgil, Aen. 6.540-543 the road has two branches one leading to *Elysium* and the other to Tartarus.

<sup>295</sup> Hesiod, Op. 169-73.

<sup>296</sup> Hesiod, Op. 167ff cf. Pindar, Ol. 2.68ff.

<sup>297</sup> Diodorus Siculus, 5.19f; Plutarch, Sert. 8.

<sup>298</sup> Pliny, Nat. 6.202-205.

<sup>299</sup> There are a few articles on biblical and cognate utopias, such as: Collins, 2000a; Neusner, 1959, 284-90; Uffenheimer, 1979, 1-15. Furthermore, there are two recent publications, a collection of essays edited by Ehud Ben Zvi (2006) and one monograph by Mary Ann Beavis (2006).

<sup>300</sup> Collins, 2000a, 51.

<sup>301</sup> Cf. Gen 12:1-3; 6-7; 13:5-17; Gen 24:7; 31:13; Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5, 11; 32:13; 33:3; Lev 20:24; 26:3-9; Num 13:28; 14:8; 16:13-14; Deut 6:3; 7:8; 8:7-10; 11: 9; Josh 2:14; 14:9; Jer 11:5; Judith 5:9; Acts 7:5; Heb 11:9. The motif also occurs in the Oracle of the Potter (P<sub>2</sub> 19-48; P<sub>3</sub> 39-76), see also comment on lines 652-656.

Promised Land are co-related. The Promised Land imagery recalls a Garden of Eden setting, a place with abundant fertility where the people live peacefully.<sup>302</sup>

There are also strong similarities between the Garden of Eden narrative and Greek myths of the Golden Age.<sup>303</sup> The image of the days of David and Solomon served as a matrix for hopes for a future Israel/Jerusalem.<sup>304</sup> Collins points out that in the Second Temple period the utopian expectations more and more concerned the utopian transformation of Jerusalem because of the reduction of Judah's territory and the ultimate loss of political autonomy.<sup>305</sup> 'Diaspora Jews in this period continued to envision the land and the city as cosmic centres of the earth to which peoples of all races would flock in utopian terms.'<sup>306</sup> We have already observed that some of these concepts have been discussed in terms of the triads of Soja and Lefebvre.<sup>307</sup> With regard to the Sibyl Collins points out Sib. Or. 3.744-761 as a utopian rendition of future Israel/Jerusalem. Even though the passage in question draws on this traditional imagery, the references to the land or the city have been obliterated. In the Third Sibyl the image of an ideal Israel has been transformed into that of an ideal world.<sup>308</sup>

During and after the exile, the temple became the subject of utopian ideals. The temple vision in Ezek 40-48 can be seen as representing a priestly ideological program for an imagined temple rather than blueprints to be followed in the future.<sup>309</sup> Likewise, the Qumran texts exhibit their utopian version of the way that matters should be run in the Jerusalem Temple. 'The Temple Scroll and the fragmentary Vision of the New Jerusalem, which is modelled on Ezekiel's Temple vision, represent the purist strand in Jewish utopian thought.'<sup>310</sup> According to Collins The Temple Scroll is a utopian document inasmuch as it is 'a blueprint for an ideal society'<sup>311</sup>. The idealised temple in the Qumran texts ultimately arose from the notion that the factual temple in Jerusalem was impure. The Qumran community was opposed to the Temple as it was in their time and claimed that eventually they would dwell in a 'House of Holiness' (בית קודש).<sup>312</sup> Mendels goes as far as suggesting that the absence of a temple at Qumran was not merely 'a religious matter, but a way of life', an element of utopia

<sup>302</sup> Cf. Lev 26; Amos 9:13; Joel 2:23; 2 Bar 73-74.

<sup>303</sup> Cf. Beavis, 2006, 35.

<sup>304</sup> 1 Kgs 5:5; Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-5, 10; 16:4-5; 32:1-2; Jer 23:5-6; Mic 4:4; 5:1-4a; Ps 72:2-7; Ezek 37:24-28; Macc 4:12; Pss. Sol. 2:19-21; 8:4; 11:1-9; 17:21-32.

<sup>305</sup> Collins, 2000a, 54.

<sup>306</sup> Collins, 2000a, 59.

<sup>307</sup> See Introduction.

<sup>308</sup> See comments on lines 702-807.

<sup>309</sup> Cf. Liss, 2006, 122-143.

<sup>310</sup> Collins, 2000a, 55. Cf. 11Q19-20; 4Q544.

<sup>311</sup> Collins, 2000a, 60.

<sup>312</sup> 1QS VIII, 5; IX, 6; 4Q259 II, 14.



‘that could have influenced [...] people who were looking for a [...] society that could function without a temple’<sup>313</sup>.

The kingdom of God in the gospels can also be seen as ideal alternate reality.<sup>314</sup> The organizational structure of the utopia becomes ‘a means of social critique’<sup>315</sup> reflecting present points of contention.<sup>316</sup> In biblical literature, utopian ideals are not necessarily about God making things better but about how they should be. Another debatable issue is the relation of past to future ideals, such as the Garden of Eden, the kingdom of David, or the First Temple. In general, biblical utopias reflect the idea of *eutopia* rather than *outopia* (no place). The Sibyl is in line with these traditions as shall become evident through the course of the book.

---

<sup>313</sup> Mendels, 1979, 216.

<sup>314</sup> In light of Ernst Bloch’s „Das Prinzip der Hoffnung“ Moltmann established his „Theologie der Hoffnung“ in which he argued that the kingdom of God is not located in a transcendent world but that Christians here and now need to work towards it. See Moltmann, 2005. See also Beavis (2006, 85-102) who discusses the kingdom of God in the teachings of Jesus in light of Hellenistic utopias and comes to the conclusion that Jesus’ kingdom is not a political or physical entity but a utopian kingdom whose characteristics resemble many of those evident in Hellenistic utopias. See also Warren Carter’s review in RBL 02/2007 (available online at: [www.bookreviews.org](http://www.bookreviews.org)).

<sup>315</sup> Schweitzer, 2006, 18.

<sup>316</sup> Schweitzer, 2006, 23.

## PART II: COMMENTARY

### 2 Section I: Lines 93-161

*Lines 93-161*

*Primary history: the flood, the Tower of Babel, the beginning of war and divided kingdoms*

#### 2.1 Introduction

##### 2.1.1 Structure

- 93-96      A fragmentary oracle about the flood
- 97-106     The Tower of Babel
- 107-158a   The Titanomachy
- 156-158a   The end of the Titans
- 158b-161   The world empires: the beginning of universal history

The introduction formulae are the primary indicator of the book's structure. It is the structure given to us by the author(s). Hence without a clear beginning, important information and a proper introduction are missing. With the beginning of the third book lost, the remainder of the book begins on line 93. In its present state, the book is lacking an introduction like those seen in lines 162-165, 196-198, 295-300, and 489-491. Nonetheless we can assume that the Sibyl introduced the beginning of her prophecy prior to line 93 in a similar fashion. The introduction formulae are the primary indicator of the book's structure. It is the structure given to us by the author(s). Hence without a clear beginning, important information and a proper introduction are missing. The sudden break-off before line 93 makes it complicated to fully grasp the fragmentary oracle in lines 93-96 which now marks the beginning of Section I of the book. In lines 97-107 the Sibyl's version of the tower of Babel account is preserved followed by an extent retelling of the Titanomachy in lines 108-158a respectively. It is therefore probable that the tower of Babel narrative was preceded by an account of the flood in lines 93-96.

##### 2.1.2 Primeval history – the horizontal and vertical lines

Two aspects shall be highlighted in this section. Firstly: the section is a recast of primeval history (*Urgeschichte*) as told in Genesis. Although it might readily be assumed that the Sibyl's account from line 108 onwards is exclusively based on Greek mythology, I will demonstrate that in fact it is a thorough amalgamation of Greek and Jewish tradition. The

Titanomachy in Sib.Or. 3 is not only related to Hesiod's Theogony but exhibits a significant resemblance to the account of Noah and the division of the earth among his sons in Genesis 10 (the Table of Nations). The Sibyl does not rewrite the Titanomachy (as it is preserved in Hesiod's Theogony) but rather reworks Genesis in her own way. The Sibyl, being a pagan prophetess, makes use of Greek mythology to connect it with Jewish history. The usage of pagan myth is a common trait of Jewish-Hellenistic texts from the Second Temple period. However as I will demonstrate, the Sibyl is not trying to reconcile Greek and Jewish tradition like Philo or Josephus do, she has a different agenda: namely to prove the superiority of the one and only (Jewish) God over the multiple Greek gods.

Secondly, space in the Third Sibyl can be defined by two lines, one vertical line that is represented by God's dwelling place in heaven whence he acts on the one hand, and a horizontal line that comprises the places, peoples, and kingdoms on earth that will be objects of God's final judgement and the lateral division of the earth in east and west and sea and land on the other. In section I of the book (lines 93-158a) a few important markers for the Sibyl's understanding of space are set.

## 2.2 Fragmentary passage (93-96)

93 ὃ ὃ δὴ πλωτῶν ὑδάτων καὶ χέρσου ἀπάσης·  
 94 ἡελίου ἀνιόντος, ὃς οὐ δὴ καὶ πάλι δύνει,  
 95 πάνθ' ὑπακούσονται κόσμον πάλιν εἰσανιόντι·  
 96 τοῦνεκ' ἄρ' αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἐπέγνων καὶ κράτος αὐτοῦ.

The first passage in the remainder of the Third Sibyl, as we now have, it is taken out of context because it lacks an introduction as well as a proper subject.<sup>1</sup> Its fragmentary nature has long been a source of speculation regarding its content and its place in the book as a whole. According to Geffcken, the passage is a Christian addition based on the phrase πάνθ' ὑπακούσονται κόσμον πάλιν εἰσανιόντι (everything will obey the one who enters the world again)<sup>2</sup> in line 95 which could be understood as a reference to the Christ.<sup>3</sup> Buitenwerf, on the other hand, takes it as a reference to Noah disembarking the ark.<sup>4</sup> Kurfeß excludes lines 93-96 from his edition altogether remarking that the passage is too damaged for reconstruction.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The subject in line 95 is included in the verb forms. However, we are not told who they refer to.

<sup>2</sup> Translation Buitenwerf, 2003, 166.

<sup>3</sup> Geffcken, 1902a, 15.

<sup>4</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 166.

<sup>5</sup> Kurfeß, 1951, 288 followed by Gauger, 1998, 491.

Buitenwerf regards lines 93-96 to be a fragmentary passage about the flood, specifically about Noah leaving the ark<sup>6</sup>, and concludes that it ‘was evidently once part of a longer passage’<sup>7</sup>. Buitenwerf’s interpretation arises from three assumptions about the book as a whole and not just from the extant passage. First, the deluge narrative is a typical Sibylline feature and also one that the reader would expect in the account of the early history of men.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the flood is also alluded to in line 109, which marks the beginning of the passage on the Titanomachy, where the Sibyl states that the tenth generation of men lived after the flood (κατακλυσμός). Moreover, the Third Sibyl claims to be a relative of Noah (lines 823-828). If read in the context of the flood narrative, the passage fits the pattern laid out by the succeeding paragraphs; similar to the Biblical version in Genesis, the flood narrative precedes that of the tower of Babel.<sup>9</sup> It is possible to see the passage as the remainder of a once full account of the deluge. However, there is no conclusive solution due to its fragmentary character.

### 2.3 The Tower of Babel (97-107)

97 ἀλλ’ ὁπότεν μέγαλοιο<sup>10</sup> θεοῦ τελέωνται ἀπειλαί,  
 98 ἄς ποτ’ ἐπηπείλησε βροτοῖς, ὅτε πύργον ἔτευξαν  
 99 χώραν ἐν Ἀσσυρίῃ· ὁμόφωνοι δ’ ἦσαν ἅπαντες  
 100 καὶ βούλοντ’ ἀναβῆν· εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα·  
 101 αὐτίκα δ’ ἀθάνατος<sup>11</sup> μέγαλιν ἐπέθηκεν ἀνάγκην  
 102 πνεύμασιν· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ’ ἄνεμοι μέγαν ὑψόθι πύργον  
 103 ῥίψαν καὶ θνητοῖσιν ἐπ’ ἀλλήλους ἔριν ὄρσαν·  
 104 τοῦνεκά τοι Βαβυλῶνα βροτοὶ πόλει οὔνομ’ ἔθεντο.  
 105 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πύργος τ’ ἔπεσεν γλῶσσαι τ’ ἀνθρώπων  
 106 παντοδαπαῖς φωναῖσι διέστρεφον αὐτὰρ ἅπασα  
 107 γαῖα βροτῶν πληροῦτο μεριζομένων βασιλειῶν,

But whenever the threats of the Great God are fulfilled,  
 With which he threatened (mortal) men, when they built a tower  
 in the land of Assyria. They were all monolingual  
 and they wanted to go up to starry heaven.  
 But straight away the Immortal laid great forces upon the winds  
 and immediately the storms dashed the great tower on high  
 and they caused strife to arise among mortals.  
 Therefore men named the city Babylon.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 154 and 165f.

<sup>7</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 165. He translates the passage as follows: Oh, oh, all the floating waters and all dry land, east and west.

<sup>8</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 165.

<sup>9</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 165.

<sup>10</sup> Epic form for μέγας. On the names of God see Part III.

<sup>11</sup> On the names of God see Part III.

When the tower had fallen, the tongues of men  
were distorted by various sounds  
and the entire earth began to be filled with divided kingdoms.

After the fragmentary passage about the flood, the Sibyl recounts the Tower of Babel narrative.<sup>12</sup> Line 97 marks the beginning of something new (ἀλλ' ὁπότεν) and separates this passage from the last. She states that all men were of one language and decided to build a tower in Assyria to go up to heaven. When men tried to enter the divine sphere, God caused storm winds that destroyed the tower, a characteristic deviation from the biblical narrative in which the tower is not destroyed. The Sibyl speaks of the cosmological frontiers that no man can breach. However, when men tried to cross that frontier and ascend into heaven, God destroyed the Tower, dispersed men over the earth and confused their languages so that the world was filled with divided kingdoms. The Sibyl puts particular emphasis on the fact that the world began to be filled with divided kingdoms while Genesis 11 only says that men were scattered over the earth. The Sibyl interprets the scattering of men as the beginning of divided kingdoms, which was ultimately the result of the dispersal of men.

The Sibyl points out that in the beginning all men were of one and the same tongue. By using the Imperfect, the Sibyl sets up an exposition to what is to follow. The adjective ὁμόφωνος does not only signify that they were of one language, it also implies that they were in concord with one another.<sup>13</sup> This was, however, prior to the arrogance of man and their attempted (and failed) entry in God's realm. This implies that there was no division of the earth and no divided kingdoms in the beginning of history.

In the original version of Genesis 11:4, men wanted to build a city and a tower with its peak reaching the sky to make themselves a name and not be scattered abroad. The Sibyl's version is more extreme, stating that they 'wanted to go up to starry heaven', i.e. to enter God's dwelling place.<sup>14</sup> In the Third Sibyl, God is imagined as dwelling in heaven.<sup>15</sup> In Isa 14:13-14 it is said of the personified arrogant city Babylon that she wanted to go up to heaven and erect

---

<sup>12</sup> The passage is quoted from Alexander Polyhistor by Eusebius (Praep. ev. 9.17-18). Lactantius, Inst. 1.6 ascribes it to the Erythraean Sibyl, who is often identified with the Cumean Sibyl.

<sup>13</sup> The term can metaphorically stand for being in agreement or concord (cf. LSJ, “ὁμοφωνέω,” 1228). The notion that people were of one accord and not just of one language is already implied by the Hebrew and Greek text of Genesis 11:1. The expression that they (literally) were of one word (אֶחָדִים דְּבָרִים) or that they had one language (φωνὴ μία πάντων) suggests that they were also of one opinion since their common language allowed them to be in agreement about building the tower. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan renders אֶחָדִים דְּבָרִים as being (that) they were of one language and one counsel (Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 11:1). However, the date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is difficult to pinpoint and chances are it was not finalised until the Medieval (see discussion in Maher, 1992, 11-12).

<sup>14</sup> The Greek god's were also believed to reside in heaven, on Mount Olympus respectively which was believed to be in heaven. See: Part III: The Image of God. Cf. Jub. 10:19.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. 174, 256, 286, 308, 373, 543 et al. Since the beginning of the book has been lost, we have to assume that God dwelling in heaven is already presupposed in the section at hand.

her throne above the stars.<sup>16</sup> The Targums expand the topic in a similar fashion to the Sibyl. In Targum Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan it is said that men wanted to put an idol on the top of the tower with a sword in its hand to wage war against God.<sup>17</sup> Josephus connects Nimrod<sup>18</sup> with the Tower of Babel and portrays him as insolent and contemptuous of God.<sup>19</sup> He notes that Nimrod raised men to insolence (ὕβρις) against God.<sup>20</sup> The same denominator (ὕβρις) is used in Josephus' version of the Flood narrative so that one can conclude that Josephus intentionally linked the two accounts.<sup>21</sup> Later, in the rabbinic tradition, the builders of the tower are made to say that they wanted to ascend to heaven and cleave it with axes so that its waters may gush forth.<sup>22</sup> The interpretation of the building of the Tower as an act of blasphemy was presumably already a commonplace when the Sibyl proclaimed her account. In the Sibyl's version, it is men's sole intention to ascend to heaven when they build the tower. With regard to the Sibyl's version of the tower narrative it has been suggested that it 'belongs with a growing tendency to depict the builders of the tower, not just as authors of a structure that reaches into the heavens (Gen 11:4), but as assailants of heaven, and even (at its strongest) theomachic adversaries of God.'<sup>23</sup> In the biblical account in Gen 11, on the other hand, God neither destroys the city nor the tower. Genesis only speaks of the confusion of tongues which forced men to stop building.<sup>24</sup> However, later texts seem to share the idea that God destroyed the tower.<sup>25</sup>

In line 99 the tower is located in the land of Assyria, other than in the biblical version where it is stated that the tower was in the land of Shinar<sup>26</sup> (Gen 11:2), and that the city was

<sup>16</sup> σὺ δὲ εἶπας ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ σου Εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναβήσομαι, ἐπάνω τῶν ἄστρον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ θήσω τὸν θρόνον μου...

<sup>17</sup> Tg. Neof. 11:4 cf. Tg. Ps.-J. 11:4.

<sup>18</sup> In the Table of Nations in Genesis 10:8-12 (cf. 1 Chr 1:10; Mic 5:6) a grandson of Ham who is said to have been a mighty hunter and builder of nations. However the Hebrew Nimrod means 'let us rebel' wherefore in Jewish tradition he became a rebel against God and was often associated with the Tower of Babel. Genesis does not associate him with the building of the tower, however, it may be inferred from the statement in Gen 10:10 that the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. Cf. Philo, Gig. 15.56; Ps.-Philo, Bib. Ant. 6.14.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ant. 1.113-117. Cf. Ps.-Philo 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ant. 1.113.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Feldman, 2000, 40 n. 287.

<sup>22</sup> mSanh. 109a.

<sup>23</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 415f. Cf. Jub. 10:19; 3 Bar 3:7; Abydenus, FGH 685 F 4b (2); Josephus, Ant. 1.115.

<sup>24</sup> Gen 11:7f LXX (MT: the city).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Jub. 10:26.

<sup>26</sup> Sinear, Shinar: empire to be distinguished from Babylonia, but with Israel = Mesopotamia, Gen 10:10, 11:2, 14:1, 9; Jos 7:21; Isa 11:11; Zech 5:11; Dan 1:2 where it means Babylonia (Köhler/Baumgartner, “שִׁנְעָר,” 2:1484f).

given the name Babel (due to the confusion of tongues).<sup>27</sup> The Sibyl is aware that Babylon was in the former land of Assyria, hence she gives us this more general position.<sup>28</sup>

The winds then destroyed the tower on high (ὕψοθι). In comparison, in the Genesis version, God is said to have come down from heaven and seen the tower.<sup>29</sup> This is usually omitted in later sources to avoid the anthropomorphism. The building of the tower is an offense against God because it forces and violates the vertical line and upsets the natural equilibrium of heaven and earth. The vertical line defines the relation of men and God; it is reciprocal. Throughout the book it is made clear several times God demands ethical behaviour on part of the people so that they will have a share in the paradisiacal circumstances that God will bring about.

The winds which God sends to destroy the tower are imagined as coming from the divine sphere because they destroy the tower on high. This is supported by the fact that it is said that God laid great force upon the πνεύματα (102). The destruction of the tower by storms is also related in Jub. 10:26 and Josephus<sup>30</sup> which suggests that this was already an established Jewish tradition at the time of writing of the Third Sibyl.<sup>31</sup> It is noteworthy though, that both Jubilees and Josephus have the term ἄνεμος (wind) rather than πνεῦμα (wind, breath, spirit). In the Sibyl's account it is likewise the winds (ἄνεμοι) that destroy the tower, but first God lays force upon the πνεύματα. In the LXX version of Gen 8:1 God sent a πνεῦμα to end the deluge. It is possible that the Sibyl drew the term from there. The term πνεῦμα implies more than one meaning.<sup>32</sup> Dunn defines pneuma as follows: 'As in earlier Jewish thought, pneuma

<sup>27</sup> Biblical etymology for the city's name, from hebrew בבל = to confuse. In Assyrian written *Bab-ilu* - 'gate of god'. (BDB, “בָּבֶל” 93).

<sup>28</sup> I argue that the author was not familiar with Shinar and hence simplified and updated the text by changing it to Assyria. However in Jub. 10:26 the tower is located between Assur and Babylon, in the land of Shinar. Even though the two texts may not be directly interconnected, they appear to have arisen from the same assumption, i.e. to associate Babylon with Assyria and downplay or omit the reference to the then unfamiliar place Shinar altogether. In Graeco-Roman historiographical accounts of world empires Assyria is listed and followed by the Persians and the Medes while the equally prominent Babylonia is omitted.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Gen 11:5 καὶ κατέβη κύριος ἰδεῖν τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸν πύργον. See also comments on line 308 where God descends unto Babylon. Cf. also Mark 1:10; Matt 3:16; 28:2; Luke 3:22; John 1:32; 6:33, 50, 58; Rev 3:12; 18:1; 20:1; 21:2.

<sup>30</sup> Ant. 1.118: The Sibyl also makes mention of this tower, and of the confusion of the language, when she says thus: “When all men were of one language, some of them built a high tower, as if they would thereby ascend up to heaven; but the gods sent storms of wind and overthrew the tower, and gave everyone a peculiar language; and for this reason it was that the city was called Babylon.” (Feldman, 2000, 43 n302).

It is unlikely that Josephus copied this from Sib. Or. 3 as he uses the plural 'gods' rather than the singular. It is therefore more likely that this quote derives from a pagan author - most likely Alexander Polyhistor who in turn may have taken it from Berossus - to whom Josephus had access (Feldman, 2000, 42 n. 302). Collins notes that even if Josephus had access to a Babylonian source it does not mean that the Sibyl drew on that source as well (Collins, 1984, 364 n. O.). Furthermore, the probability that Josephus drew on Polyhistor is strengthened by the verbal agreements between Josephus and Polyhistor. Polyhistor in turn changed the singular to plural in order to update the passage to his own pagan beliefs (cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 169f).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 171.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Horn, 1992, 55.

denotes that power which humanity experiences as relating it to the spiritual realm, the realm of reality which lies beyond ordinary observation and human control.<sup>33</sup> Within this general definition, *pneuma* has a variety of meanings. Initially, the term was adopted from Hellenism where it already occupied a meaning beyond that of 'wind' or 'breath'. At the same time in the MT the Hebrew רוּחַ had already signified the 'spirit' of God (Gen 1:2)<sup>34</sup>, which the LXX renders as πνεῦμα<sup>35</sup> and ultimately becomes the Holy Spirit in early Christianity.<sup>36</sup> In the Third Sibyl, the term is used in the sense of the spirit of God in line 701 (πνεῦμα θεοῦ). In antiquity, meteorological phenomena were commonly believed to be caused by the gods.<sup>37</sup> Πνεῦμα (or רוּחַ) in the MT can be means of God's judgement (Jonah 4:8); it can accompany God's appearance (Ezek 1:4) or announce it (Jer 4:11f, Hos 4:19). The motif of God as lord over the winds occurs repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible<sup>38</sup>, and it can then figuratively be his breath (Exod 15:8, Isa 11:15).<sup>39</sup> An amalgamation of these various traditions is reflected in the Sibyl's version of the tower narrative. That God is the initiator and master of the elements can also be found in other sections of the book.<sup>40</sup> The πνεύματα are means of God's judgement and signify his coming.<sup>41</sup> The major difference to the Genesis version is that the tower is, at least partially<sup>42</sup>, destroyed. The Sibyl shares this notion with many contemporary Jewish writings, such as Jubilees and Josephus, who claims to quote the Sibyl with regard to the tower.<sup>43</sup> The building of the tower is an offence against God and the first example of men's overbearing hubris. Although it cannot be said with certainty, it is possible that the Sibyl had more than just avoiding repetition in mind when she opted for the term πνεῦμα. Either way, the notion that God enacts the πνεῦμα and is its master is obvious.

<sup>33</sup> Dunn, 1998, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Gen 1:2; 41:38; Num 23:6; 24:2; 1 Sam 19:20, 23; 2 Chr 24:20; Isa 11:2; Ezek 11:24; Dan 4:18; 5:11 (all LXX); Matt 3:16; 12:28; Rom 8:9, 14; 1 Cor 2:11, 14; 3:16; 7:40; 12:3; Eph 4:30; Phil 3:3; 1 Pet 4:14; 1 John 4:2.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Judg 9:23 LXX; 1 Kgs 22:21 LXX; Isa 63:14 LXX.

<sup>36</sup> For the development and understanding of the spirit in Pauline thought see Horn, 1992.

<sup>37</sup> Zeus in his function as sky-god and weather-god is particularly associated with meteorological phenomena such as winds, storms and rain (Homer, Il. 12.25; Solon, fragment 13.17f; Philostratos, Vit. Apoll. 4.30; Apollonius of Rhodes, Argon. 2.516f). He calms the storm winds (Homer, Il. 5.522f) and sends favourable winds instead (Homer, Od. 5.176; 15.475). Ζεὺς οὐριος ('Zeus fair-wind') is attested by Aeschylus (Aeschylus, Suppl. 594), and similar wind cults are attested by Herodotus (Herodotus, Hist. 7.178; 7.189; 7.191). In the ANE storm gods were common and the biblical god also amalgamated their features.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Gen 8:1; Exod 10:13.19; 14:21; Ps 135:6; 104:4; Ezek 13:11ff.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Horn, 1992, 56.

<sup>40</sup> Sib. Or. 3.174; 539-543; 619-623; 675-684; 689-692; 746-750; 761; 777-780; 800-807. See also: Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>41</sup> In Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, for instance, God consults his 70 angels and together they disperse men into 70 nations (Tg. Ps.-J. 11:7-8).

<sup>42</sup> That the winds destroyed the tower on high could mean that only the top was destroyed.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Jub. 10:26; Josephus, Ant 1.118. Cf. also Epiphanius, Pan. 1.1.5; Syncellus, 1.77; Cedrenus, 1.22.



When God destroyed the tower, the wind caused ἔρις (strife) among the people so that they were no longer in harmony (103). Since God is the master of the winds it is he who caused the strife to arise among the people in the first place. In Homer's *Iliad*, the goddess Eris is sister and consort of Ares.<sup>44</sup> In the *Iliad* Eris provoked warfare and initiated the Trojan War.<sup>45</sup> Ἐρις is the state of mind that provokes the dispersion of men and establishment of divided kingdoms and ultimately causes the first war (πολέμοιο καταρχή).<sup>46</sup> Men were no longer in harmony when God caused ἔρις among them. The term recurs in line 379, where it is listed among other vices and, in line 640 where it is listed amongst the eschatological woes. In Josephus' account of the Jewish war, ἔρις among the Jewish parties is named as a key reason for the outbreak of the revolt against Rome.<sup>47</sup>

Instead of being ὁμόφωνοι, men's tongues divided into all kinds of sounds. They were no longer in harmony with each other but divided themselves into all kinds of speeches (παντοδαπαί φωναί). The Greek φωνή signifies human speech but also all kinds of sounds. Men were once in accord (ὁμόφωνοι) but due to their arrogance ἔρις originated among them and instead of being of one sound (harmony) they became of all kinds of sounds (παντοδαπαῖ φωναῖ). Here the Sibyl's universalistic approach comes to the fore. Whereas once mankind was in harmony with one another; henceforth they are separated into many different kingdoms.

The Sibyl concludes the Tower narrative with the statement that henceforth the entire world was filled with divided kingdoms. As in Genesis 11 the Tower of Babel narrative is of global significance. Whereas in Genesis the significance lies within the origin of languages and the dispersion of men, the Sibyl emphasises the status of the world as one of divided kingdoms that are not in harmony with one another.

In the Sibyl's account the building of the tower signifies the transgression of the fixed demarcation between the human and the divine whereas in Genesis the Tower of Babel narrative mainly serves as aetiology of the existence of various languages and nations. In the Sibylline version, it is extended to aetiology of the existence of divided kingdoms, evil in general, and the struggle for world dominion. It is the hubristic endeavour of men to force the vertical line that constitutes the relationship between men and God. The outcome of this will be explained in the account of the Titanomachy.

---

<sup>44</sup> Homer, *Il.* 4.441.

<sup>45</sup> Homer, *Il.* 4.439ff; 11.13ff. However the goddess Eris plays no role in Greek religion. '[w]hether as a goddess or a concept, [E]ris remains inconspicuous until Euripides gives the word a thematic importance in a number of his works' (Wilson, 1979, 7). It should also be noted that Eris' opposite is Harmonia.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. lines 153-155.

<sup>47</sup> Josephus, *B.J.* 5.71, 309.

## 2.4 The Titanomachy and the tripartite division of the world (108-158a)

It has often been observed that the description of the Titan War in Sib. Or. 3.110-158a derives to a certain extent from Hesiod's Theogony.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the Theogony, however, the Sibyl describes the Protogenoi, the first Greek gods (Uranus and Gaia) as the most excellent (πρώτιστοι) of articulate humans (113). Accordingly the Titans borne by this pair were also human. The Sibyl simply refers to them children (τέκνα) of Uranus and Gaia. In the creation myth, as told by Hesiod in the Theogony, Gaia and Uranus are the first gods. The Sibyl adapted the feature of creation as a fight as it is expressed in the Theogony and biblical as well as Ancient Near Eastern traditions<sup>49</sup> and recast it in her own way. The Sibyl criticises the Titans for starting war on earth and indirectly the Greeks for venerating them as gods.

### Excursus The Euhemerism

Already Lactantius noticed the similarities between the Sibyl's account of the Titans and that of Euhemerus of Messene<sup>50</sup>, who is chiefly known for a rationalising method of interpretation (Euhemerism) that treats mythological accounts as a reflection of actual historical events shaped by retelling and traditional mores.<sup>51</sup> Of the Latin translation of his work only a few fragments have come down to us, passed on by Diodorus of Sicily<sup>52</sup>, preserved by Eusebius<sup>53</sup>. Other fragments survived in quotations by Lactantius and Quintus Ennius (apud Lactantius). In the account of Euhemerus, as preserved in Lactantius, it is Titan and Saturn (=Cronus) who fight over world dominion.<sup>54</sup> Formerly scholars were largely of the opinion that the euhemerism in Sib. Or. 3 had been copied from the Babylonian Sibyl.<sup>55</sup> Recently scholars have begun to acknowledge that the euhemerism is originally of Jewish provenience.<sup>56</sup> Because the Jews liked the idea that polytheism was a degenerated form of monotheism, which they believed to be original, they were keen to adapt the euhemeristic traditions of the Greek gods as deified human kings.<sup>57</sup> Ultimately this made it possible to synchronise biblical and Hellenistic traditions without departing from monotheism. A similar form of de-mystification can also be seen in Philo's *de opificio mundi* in which biblical creation tradition and Plato's *Timaios* are woven together and another critique of deified kings can be found in the

<sup>48</sup> Hesiod, Theog. 421ff. Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 172; Merkel, 2003, 1085 n. 110a.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Keel/Schroer, 2002, 44, 124 and 131.

<sup>50</sup> Lactantius, Inst. 1.14.8. 'Haec historia quam uera sit docet Sibylla Erythraea eadem fere dicens, nisi quod in paucis quae ad rem non attinent discrepat.'

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Winiarczyk, 2002, 179-181.

<sup>52</sup> Diodorus Siculus, 5.41-46 and 6.1.

<sup>53</sup> Eusebius, Praep. ev. 2.2.59.

<sup>54</sup> Lactantius, Inst. 1.14.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Geffcken, 1902, 97-102.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 172ff; Merkel, 2003, 1061 but already Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 512.

<sup>57</sup> Artapanos equates Moses with Hermes-Thith and Musaios, the teacher of Orpheus (apud Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.27.1-37 cf. Holladay, 1983, 189-244; Bloch, 2009). According to Pseudo-Eupolemus Belus and Cronos are the same and the Phoenicians and Canaanites derived from Belus (apud Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.17.9 cf. Holladay, 1984, 157-188). Furthermore, Atlas and Enoch are identical and Enoch learned astrology through the help of the angels of God from whom the Jews learned it (ibid). In fragment two (9.18.2) he states that Abraham was a descendent of the giants who were destroyed by the gods for their iniquity. One of these giants was Belus who built a tower and lived in it. Belus (βῆλος) is derived from the Hebrew בל/בעל (lord) and is often equated with Hadad who is the north-west Semitic god of thunder and rain (see also the Baal cycle in KTU 1.1-1.6).

Wisdom of Solomon 14:12-21. Artapanus, Eupolemos, Theodotos and Pseudo-Eupolemos can be considered followers of euhemerism as well.<sup>58</sup>

In his summary of Euhemerus' account, Diodorus of Sicily notes that Uranus was the first king and the first to honour the gods of heaven; hence he received the name Uranus (sky, heaven).<sup>59</sup> Furthermore he records that Uranus had originally been a human king of the Atlantians who, due to his observations of the sun, moon, and stars, was able to predict the future. After he died, the people venerated him as a god.<sup>60</sup>

#### 2.4.1 The Titan dominion and the Titanomachy (108-113)

108 καὶ τότε δὴ δεκάτῃ γενεῇ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων,  
 109 ἐξ οὗ περ κατακλυσμὸς ἐπὶ προτέρους γένετ' ἄνδρας.  
 110 καὶ βασίλευσε Κρόνος καὶ Τιτὰν Ἰαπετός τε,  
 111 Γαίης τέκνα φέριστα καὶ Οὐρανοῦ,  
 οὓς ἐκάλεσαν  
 112 ἄνθρωποι γαῖαν τε καὶ οὐρανόν, οὕνομα θέντες,  
 113 οὐνεκά τοι πρότιστοι ἔσαν μερόπων ἀνθρώπων.

And then came the tenth generation of articulate men,  
 since the flood had been on former men.  
 and Cronus, Titan, and Iapetos were kings,  
 the most excellent children of Gaia and Uranus,  
 whom men dubbed heaven and earth,  
 because they were the best of articulate men.

Line 108 marks the beginning of a new passage as is evident from the formula καὶ τότε δὴ. The Sibyl starts her account of the Titans by stating that they were kings (βασίλευσε) in the tenth generation of articulate men since the flood 'had been on the former men' (ἐπὶ προτέρους ἄνδρας). The Sibyl differentiates between the antediluvian and the post-diluvian men.<sup>61</sup> The post-diluvian people are endowed with speech (μέρωψ). The term is derived from Homer.<sup>62</sup> The fact that the Sibyl refers to the flood sheds light on the lost beginning of the

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Winiarczyk, 2002, 176-179.

<sup>59</sup> Apud Eusebius, Praep. ev. 2.59b-61a.

<sup>60</sup> Diodorus Siculus, 3.56.3-5.

<sup>61</sup> According to Gen 6:4 the giants lived before the flood. That the Sibyl places the Titans after the flood seems to be inconsistent with the biblical narrative. However, it is already a innerbiblical problem that technically the Table of Nations in Gen 10 presupposes the judgement and dispersion of mankind in Gen 11. The First Sibylline Oracle describes the second generation as Titans and implicitly identifies them with the builders of the Tower of Babel (Sib. Or. 1). Usually, the Giants rather than the Titans are credited for building the Tower in Hellenistic Judaism (cf. Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9-17.2-3, 9.18.2). This identification is based on Gen 10:8-10 where Nimrod is described as γίγας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Cf. Ant 1.113-117. Cf. Ps.-Philo 6. By the Hellenistic age Giants and Titans were often confused (cf. Waßmuth, 2010, 156). In light of Gen 6:4 the identification of the Giants and the builders of the tower is problematic because the Giants are supposed to have been destroyed by the flood. Waßmuth (2010, 156) suggests that for this reason Sib. Or. 1 attributes the tower to the Titans and that it was influenced by Sib. Or. 3 where the Titanomachy follows the Tower of Babel narrative. On the giants in Gen 6:4 see Witte, 1998, 65-74.296ff.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 1.250, 2.285; Hesiod, Op. 109. The etymology is uncertain but μέρωψ (used only in the plural) came to function as an equivalent for ἄνθρωποι (LSJ, "μέρωψ," 1105). The term is not very common in Jewish literature. It has several occurrences in the Sibylline books though (Sib. Or. 1.1, 72; 2.14, 54, 90, 164; 3.27, 62, 68, 108, 113, 305, 430; 4.40, 86; 5.198, 350, 377, 455, 468, 479; 8.220, 365, 440; 11.14, 164, 199;

book. It is evident from this reference that an account of the flood must have preceded that of the Titanomachy.

In line 108 it is said that the Titans reigned in the tenth generation<sup>63</sup> of articulate men (μερόπων ἀνθρώπων). Within the sequence of the book, this happened after the destruction of the tower at Babel.<sup>64</sup> The phrase καὶ τότε δὴ δεκάτῃ γενεῇ also occurs in Sib. Or. 2.15, where the ten generation -scheme is already an established Sibylline feature. It was in the tenth generation that the Titans were kings (line 110), i.e. the sons of Gaia and Uranus (111). Men called Gaia and Uranus 'Earth and Heaven' because they were the first or most excellent of articulate men (μερόπων ἀνθρώπων).<sup>65</sup>

Line 113 also poses some difficulties. The question arises to whom πρότιστοι ἔσαν μερόπων ἀνθρώπων refers. It either refers to the Titans in line 110 or to the people in line 112. The subordinate clause in line 112 can be understood in two ways: either line 113 refers to Gaia and Uranus, saying that they were the first or the best of articulate men, or it refers to the people who named them as they were the first articulate men. The solution probably depends on how one understands πρότιστοι. The adjective can mean first in space, time, number or rank.<sup>66</sup> Either way, the continuity poses difficulties if πρότιστοι ἔσαν μερόπων ἀνθρώπων is translated as 'they were the first of articulate men'. The key problem is the term πρότιστοι. According to the Sibyl Gaia, Uranus, and the Titans lived ten generations after the deluge (lines 108-110). At first it seems unlikely that the Titans lived after the flood since if πρότιστοι is translated as first, which would imply that they would have lived *before* the deluge. In addition, the Titan reign follows the tower of Babel narrative where the tongues of men were confused. Therefore, it would be inconclusive to say that the men who dubbed Gaia and Uranus were the first articulate men. Hence the reference to the first (πρότιστοι) μερόπων ἀνθρώπων in line 113 seems out of sequence regardless of whether it refers to the Titans or

---

12.216; 14.77, 96, 158, 220, 230, 251, 356, 359) while the only other two occurrences are to be found in Ps.-Orph. 1.22; Aristob. 4.3. The abundance of the word in the Sibyllines is probably due to their interdependence and their imitation of Homeric style. The construction μερόπων ἀνθρώπων has only these two occurrences in Sib. Or. 3 (cf. lines 108; 113) although the Sibyl uses just μέρον as an epithet for men a couple of times.

<sup>63</sup> Buitenwerf (2003, 172) suggests that if the Sybil had specific persons in mind when speaking of the tenth generation, it would rather be Abraham who is usually presented as having lived ten generations after the flood (Cf. Josephus, Ant. 1.158 where Josephus quotes Berossus: μετὰ δὲ τὸν κατακλυσμὸν δεκάτῃ γενεᾷ). However, the Sibyl does not mention any of the biblical primeval characters, except in lines 24-26 but that section does not belong to the Third Book. Rather than referring to Abraham, the ten generations can be regarded as a 'typical' Sibylline feature.

<sup>64</sup> The Titanomachy is clearly separated from the account of the Tower of Babel, 108f is a conclusion while 110ff introduces a new section. Sib. Or. 1, 8, and 11 which mention the tower are all dependent on Sib. Or. 3 and draw the identification from here.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Gauger, 1998, 73.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. LSJ, "πρῶτος," 1534-35.

the humans who gave them names. It is therefore safe to take *πρώτιστοι* as a parallel adjective to *φέριστα* in line 111 and to translate it accordingly as ‘most excellent’.

The phrase *πρώτιστοι μερόπων ἀνθρώπων* is reminiscent of Hesiod’s description of the golden race in his work *Opera et Dies*. The gods first created the golden race (*Χρύσειον μὲν πρώτιστα γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων*)<sup>67</sup>, a noble race of men that was beloved by the gods and that was ruled by Cronus.<sup>68</sup> The mythical Golden Age in which the golden race lived is an ideal age of the past when humanity was noble and lived peacefully in abundant fertility. That the Sibyl was strongly influenced by Hesiod’s *Opera* will become more evident towards the end of the book.<sup>69</sup>

In an Orphic hymn from the first century CE, the Titans are similarly designated as: *Τιτῆνες, Γαίης τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἡμετέρων πρόγονοι πατέρων* (Titans, splendid children of Gaia and Uranus, the ancestors of our fathers).<sup>70</sup> The formulation in line 111 is very reminiscent of that in the Orphic Hymn inasmuch as the Titans are designated as ancestors of the human fathers. If translated in this way, line 113 should indeed refer to the Titans, not to the humans who gave them names, and should be translated as ‘because they (the Titans) were the most excellent of articulate men’.<sup>71</sup> In line 108 it was said that the Titan reign began in the tenth generation of *μερόπων ἀνθρώπων* so it is unlikely that the people of the tenth generation or the Titans should be called the first articulate men.

In the Sibyl’s account of the Titanomachy, it is implied through the dubbing of earth and heaven, i.e. Gaia and Uranus, that creation is traditionally imagined as a division of earth and heaven (112). The Greeks then erroneously attributed creation to the Titans (113), who were nothing but deified mortal kings. Later in the book the Sibyl remarks that God is the creator of heaven and earth<sup>72</sup> Heaven marks the divine sphere in opposition to earth, the sphere of mortal men. A full account of the creation of the world may have been part of the (now lost) beginning of the book.

To support the view that the Sibyl intended to portray the Titans as mortal kings line 137 deserves attention. In line 137f the Titans are called *ἄγριοι ἄνδρες Τιτῆνες* (savage Titan men) for devouring their male children. According to LSJ the noun *ἄνθρωπος* can even mean man as

<sup>67</sup> Hesiod, *Op.* 109.

<sup>68</sup> Hesiod, *Op.* 109-126.

<sup>69</sup> See comments on lines 744-756 and 767ff. See also: Part III: The divine dominion as Utopia.

<sup>70</sup> Orpheus, *Hymni* 37.1f. first century CE, probably derived from an older orphic tradition. J.N. Bremmer, "Titans," DNP, n.p. Cited October 24th 2010. Online: [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=bnp\\_e1215840](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=bnp_e1215840).

<sup>71</sup> This translation is also postulated by Buitenerwerf, 2003, 173. However he takes it as a given. This is followed by Lightfoot, 2007, 212.

<sup>72</sup> *ὅς οὐρανὸν ἔκτισε καὶ γῆν* (786 cf. 704, see also comments there).

opposed to the gods.<sup>73</sup> The fact that the Sibyl calls the Titans humans is incontrovertible. By calling them savage (ἄγριοι) the Sibyl passes a moral judgement as the denominator 'savage' describes their moral qualities rather than them living in the fields.<sup>74</sup> Throughout the book it becomes evident that the Sibyl judges the nations by ethical standards. Her first assessment is that of the Titans as savage men in line 137.<sup>75</sup>

The Titanomachy as it is found in Hesiod's account has a cosmological and a theological meaning as it signifies a revolutionary transition from a chaotic, warlike world to an organised, civilised one. It is a symbol of order against chaos, as in the Ancient Near Eastern creation myths. In the Sibyl version, however, the Titan War is brought to an end by God and not by the Greek god Zeus as in Greek mythology. The Sibyl is trying to show that the Titans were nothing but deified kings who brought strife (ἔρις) and who divided kingdoms into the world. God, however, is the sole sovereign ruler who will eventually establish his dominion on earth for the pious people that survive his judgement (lines 767ff). The Sibyl is trying to make sure that there is war and evil in the world because men, and especially the Greeks, identify other people as gods who claim world dominion. However, only God is the true king.<sup>76</sup> Zeus, who in Greek mythology as preserved in Hesiod's Theogony<sup>77</sup> emerges victorious from the Titanomachy and brings order to the cosmos, has little impact on the Sibyl's version. However, it is implied by the Sibyl that he is the ancestor of the Greeks.<sup>78</sup>

The term ἔρις reconnects the Titanomachy to the Tower of Babel account. The formulations in lines 103 and 119a are identical: ῥίψαν καὶ θνητοῖσιν ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ἔριν ὄρσαν(103), δεινὴν ποιήσαντες ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ἔριν ὄρσαν (119a). In both, the Tower of Babel narrative and The Titanomachy, ἔρις was the beginning of a chain of events. In the tower narrative it caused divided kingdoms while in the Titan narrative it caused divided kingdoms and the beginning of war. Seen in this light, the Titanomachy and the tower narrative both have the same goal, namely to explain the origin of different kingdoms and ultimately the origin of all war (rather than the existence of various languages and nations).

Quintus Ennius' version (as preserved in Lactantius) continues with the account of a struggle between Cronus and Zeus.<sup>79</sup> It is obvious why the Sibyl omits this passage: she has no interest in the stories of the Greek gods. Besides, in order to avoid calling Zeus a god in

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 1.544.

<sup>74</sup> LSJ, "ἄγριος," 15. Cf. Homer, Il. 8.96, Od. 1.199; Aristophanes, Nub. 569; Plato, Resp. 329c.

<sup>75</sup> The view that the Titans were but deified human kings is supported by Collins, 2000, 163 n. 31.

<sup>76</sup> Sib. Or. 3.115, 499, 560, 616, 717, 808.

<sup>77</sup> Hesiod, Theog. 617-735.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. line 141 where Zeus is sent to Phrygia via two Cretan men and 401-404 where the Sibyl speaks of the race of Rhea, which, in this case, signifies the Greeks. In Let. Aris, 15f God and Zeus are identified. The Sibyl, however, does not share that notion. Cf. Sib. Or. 3.403 where the Greeks are referred to as 'foul race of Rhea'.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Ennius apud Lactantius, Inst. 1.14.11-12.

the first place, she includes him with 'all family of the Titans and Cronus' (157). Since Zeus is a son of Cronus, he is part of the Titan family and therefore perished along with the rest of them.

## 2.4.2 The tripartite division of the earth and the beginning of divided kingdoms

### 2.4.2.1 The establishment of the horizontal line (114-120)

114 τρισσαὶ δὴ μερίδες γαίης κατὰ κλῆρον ἐκάστου,  
 115 καὶ βασίλευσεν ἕκαστος ἔχων μέρος οὐδ' ἐμάχοντο·  
 116 ὅρκοι γάρ τ' ἐγένοντο πατρὸς μερίδες τε δίκαιαι.

threefold were the portions of the earth according to the lot of each  
 and each one reigned and had a share and did not fight,  
 for oaths were made to their father and the divisions were just.

In line 107 it is said that 'the earth of men was filled with divided (μεριζομένων) kingdoms'. This line concludes the tower narrative; the divided kingdoms were the result of the dispersion of men after the destruction of the tower and the confusion of tongues. The Titanomachy, however, picks up on the topic of the divided kingdoms: 'threefold were the portions (μερίδες) according to the lot of each of them [i.e. the Titans]' (114) and according to the oaths they swore to their father Uranus each one had a share (μέρος) and 'the divisions (μερίδες) were just' (116). The threefold repetition of the term μέρος/μερίς alone is noteworthy. In line 107 the same term is used to describe the divided kingdoms. It is apparent that the Sibyl wants to explain not only how men were dispersed all over the earth and created kingdoms but, more importantly, how war first broke out and that blame can be firmly placed on the first kings of men, the Titans, whom the misguided Greeks worship as gods. The beginning of war is essential for the Sibyl's outline of the horizontal line.

117 τηνίκα δὴ πατρὸς τέλος χρόνος ἵκετο γήρως  
 118 καὶ ῥ' ἔθανεν· καὶ παῖδες ὑπερβασίην ὅρκοισιν  
 119 δεινὴν ποιήσαντες ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ἔριν ὄρσαν,  
 120 ὃς πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν ἔχων βασιληίδα τιμήν.

When their father's full time of age came  
 and he died, the sons transgressed the oaths  
 in a terrible way, strife arose among them  
 as to who would have royal authority and dominion over all men.

After Uranus died<sup>80</sup> the Titans became greedy and therefore they fought over the divisions of the earth, in a terrible way, although the divisions had been just (μερίδες τε δίκαιαι, 116). ἔρις in line 119b is the common denominator with the Tower of Babel narrative; in line 103 the same formulation can be observed (ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ἔριν ὥρσαν). Once their father Uranus died, the Titan brother raised strife (ἔρις) among one another. In the tower narrative, strife had befallen the people because they had been so arrogant as to try and enter God's divine realm (103). Among the Titans, fighting arose because they were arrogant in claiming dominion over all mankind (πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν). The claim of the Titans is universalistic. They each claim world dominion, hence ending up in conflict. As a result, God thwarted the Titans. A detailed commentary of the Titan War in lines 119-155 is beyond the scope of this study but for the sake of understanding the context of lines 117-118 a short overview should suffice.<sup>81</sup> However, they served as paragons for the kingdoms that succeeded them, i.e. all human kingdoms. It can be inferred from line 153f and the list of kingdoms in lines 158f that the strife caused by the Titans in turn provoked war (πόλεμος) among the nations that followed them (156b-161). In Homer's Iliad the goddess Eris caused the outbreak of the Trojan War.<sup>82</sup> In the Third Sibyl, the Titans cause all war through ἔρις: αὕτη δ' ἔστ' ἀρχὴ πολέμου πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν (154), πρώτη γάρ τε βροτοῖς αὕτη πολέμοιο καταρχή (155).<sup>83</sup>

Eventually, the sons of Cronus declared war against Titan (153). The Sibyl uses the construct πόλεμος μέγας ἡδὲ κυδοιμός to describe the beginning of war which ultimately marks the beginning of all war (154-155). The word κυδοιμός recurs in lines 535 and 751. The latter marks the ending of war on earth during God's final judgement. It is at that point that God will establish his divine kingdom and all war on earth will cease, thus concluding the horizontal line that came into being with the beginning of war.<sup>84</sup> In line 751, God ends what the Titans had begun. The Titanomachy together with the Tower of Babel narrative serves as an introduction to universal history as a whole and the history of the people of God in particular. Both texts aim at the genesis of divided kingdoms and the resulting struggle for world dominion. The euhemerism of the Titans serves as the perfect apology of how conflict first came into the world. In the mind of the Sibyl, the beginning of war and hence of the succeeding kingdoms came about with the Titans and their non-adherence to their father's

<sup>80</sup> In Hesiod, Theog. 176-209, however, it is said that Cronus castrated Uranus and took over his dominion.

<sup>81</sup> For discussion of the lines in question see Buitenwerf, 2003, 174-77.

<sup>82</sup> Homer, Il. 4.441.

<sup>83</sup> This was the beginning of war for all mortals, because this was the first beginning of war for mortals.

<sup>84</sup> In Pseudo Philo's account of Genesis he notes that while Noah was still alive and the earth had been divided among his sons 'all gathered together in one place and lived in accord, and the earth was at peace.' Ps.-Philo 5.2f (trans. D.J. Harrington in Charlesworth, 1985), 390. When Noah died, the people began to build the tower at Babel (Ps.-Philo 5.8-6.18).



oaths. This concept culminates in the (then) current threat of the Roman push towards the east. A famous line by Heraclitus reads ‘War is the father of all, the king of everything’.<sup>85</sup> The Sibyl, on the other hand, is repeatedly trying to demonstrate that war is an evil that was created by human hubris. In Jubilees, we find a similar concept. In Jub. 11, the sons of Noah are said to have begun wars against each other and to establish the beginning of kingdoms which would wage war against one another.<sup>86</sup> According to Jubilees all men began to do evil from thereon. ‘The story contains echoes of more than one Jewish myth. The Titan's bloody history also recalls the bloodbath brought about by the Watchers and their offspring, the Giants, who slaughtered each other’<sup>87</sup>.

#### 2.4.2.2 The tripartite division of the world according to the Sibyl

The three sons of Uranus were each assigned a third part of the world to rule over equally. Each son reigned over his territory and was bound by oath not to violate the others' portions (115-16), but after Uranus died, the sons 'transgressed against the oaths in a terrible way, they stirred strife (ἔρις) against one another as to who would have royal authority and reign over all men' (118-20). Initially, Cronus was allowed to rule over all on a provisional and temporary basis but he was forbidden to rear an heir that could succeed him (127-131). As a result, Rhea hid the sons born to her, namely Zeus and Poseidon (132-146). When Titan discovered that he had been deceived, war broke out between the families (147-153), this being described as 'the beginning of war for all mortals' (154-5). The battle for world dominion continued after the descendants of Titan and Cronus had died (156-8) which is evident from the subsequent list of nations (158b-161).<sup>88</sup> The Sibyl emphasises that when the oath was broken, struggle for world dominion began among the three sons, and that before establishing his dominion on earth, and God will judge all nations by sword and fire.<sup>89</sup> The Sibyl's view is dominated by the idea of empires that, each in turn, struggle for world dominion. The violation of the oath by the Titans was the origin of the ongoing conflicts between the empires. Only in the very end will there be peace for the righteous people of God. The parallel to Jub. 8-9 is obvious: three sons are assigned three portions by lot (Jub.

<sup>85</sup> Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς (Heraclitus, Frg. 53).

<sup>86</sup> Jub. 11:2: 'And the sons of Noah began to war on each other, to take captive and to slay each other, and to shed the blood of men on the earth, and to eat blood, and to build strong cities, and walls, and towers, and individuals (began) to exalt themselves above the nation, and to found the beginnings of kingdoms, and to go to war people against people, and nation against nation, and city against city, and all (began) to do evil, and to acquire arms, and to teach their sons war, and they began to capture cities, and to sell male and female slaves.' (trans. Charles, 1902).

<sup>87</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 212. Cf. 1 En. 10:9, 12; Jub. 7:22.

<sup>88</sup> Scott, 1995, 38.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. lines 492-519; 689-90.

8:11), the oath not to violate the boundaries. If broken, the offender would be cursed and ultimately divine judgement by sword and fire would be brought about.<sup>90</sup>

The power struggle is also mirrored in the Noah narrative of Genesis. In Gen 9:20-27 Ham disgraces his father sexually by seeing him in the nude.<sup>91</sup> In Genesis the episode serves to discredit Ham over and against Shem and Japheth. However, it is analogous to the castration of Uranus at the hand of Cronus in the original Theogony.<sup>92</sup> In the Third Sibyl, however, these sexual connotations are obliterated. While in the Sibyl's version, the narrative breaks off after the imprisonment of Cronus and Rhea, Lactantius notes that, according to the Erythraean Sibyl, Jupiter (=Zeus), who had been sent to Crete after his birth, freed his parents with the help of a Cretan army. Later on struggle broke out between Saturn (=Cronus) and Jupiter with the latter emerging victorious.<sup>93</sup>

Ultimately, within the framework of the third Sibylline book, the Titanomachy serves as a relativisation of the dominion of space (i.e. the habitable world) in the past. The Sibyl demonstrates that not only is God the sole ruler now but that he always was. The Tower of Babel narrative serves the same end by showing that no man can enter the divine sphere. Men's hubris is the cause of conflict and ultimately of war.

#### **Exkursus: The Sibyl and the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 and Jubilees 8-9**

It is noteworthy that the Sibyl lists three sons of Gaia and Uranus: Cronus, Titan, and Iapetos. The singular Titan does not occur in Hesiod's theogony. As a matter of fact, the name Titan as a singular does not appear at all until the Roman period where he was often identified as the sun god. It first appears in Eusebius, quoting Ezekiel the Tragedian, who equates Titan with Helios.<sup>94</sup> The etymology of 'Titan' is unclear but it seems that Titan has his origins in a non-Greek context in the East.<sup>95</sup> In Homer's Iliad he appears by the name Τιθωνός.<sup>96</sup> A cult for Τιτάν on a mountain near Sicyon in Anatolia is attested by Pausanias.<sup>97</sup> There, he is a brother to Helios. It seems likely that Titan (or Tithanos) was associated with the Mithras<sup>98</sup> cult in Anatolia. On his way to the west, the Greeks interpreted him in a two-fold manner: first as Cronus and secondly as Titan. Both of them were often identified with each other and (inaccurately) equated with

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Jub. 9:14-15 cf. Ezek 38:22. By drawing a parallel between Jub. 8-9 and Sib.Or. 3, Scott concludes that the 'Book of Noah' - which is presumably preserved in Jubilees - circulated in Alexandria based on the false assumption that Sib.Or. 3 originated there (Cf. Scott, 2003, 37). The debate about the existence of a book of Noah is contentious and shall not be discussed here (see for instance: Martinez, 1992).

<sup>91</sup> Nissinen shows that Ham did more than just see his father naked. Rather than that, the passage implies a sexual act that humiliates and dishonours the victim (Nissinen, 2002, 53).

<sup>92</sup> Hesiod, Theog. 176-209.

<sup>93</sup> Lactantius, Inst. 1.14.5.

<sup>94</sup> Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.29.3.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Diodorus Siculus, 2.22.3; 4.75.3.

<sup>96</sup> 'Ὡς δ' ἐκ λεγέων παρ' ἀγαυοῦ Τιθωνοῖο ὄρνυθ', ἵν' ἀθανάτοισι φάος φέροι ἡδὲ βροτοῖσι (Homer, Il. 11.1).

<sup>97</sup> Pausanias, Descr. 2.11.5.

<sup>98</sup> The name 'Mithras' is of Persian origin. It is reflected in the name 'Mithridates' which was the name of a dynasty in Pontus (North-Anatolia). The last of the line, Mithridates VI of Pontus (120-63 BCE), after whom the Mithridatic Wars against Rome are named, emphasized both his Greek and his Persian origin as can be seen on several coins. Cf. Merkelback, 1984. Cf. Justin, Ep. hist. Phil. 38.7.1.

Helios.<sup>99</sup> A few epigrams from the Hellenistic period onwards speak of Titan in the singular and equate him with the sun god.<sup>100</sup> The transformation of the singular Titan into a plural, namely as a collective name of the Titans, is a peculiarity of the formation of Greek mythology - its etymology, however, remains a matter of dispute. The account of Euhemerios and Ennius in Lactantius also speaks of Titan playing a role in the Titan War. Ennius died in 169 BCE, Euhemerios lived some 100 years earlier. If the Third Sibylline book came into being sometime between 89 BCE (First Mithridatic War) and 63 BCE (Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem)<sup>101</sup>, the Sibyllist was already able to draw from an established tradition at this time. Since Titan does not occur in the works of Hesiod, the Sibyl must rely on another source.

The other two Titans, Iapetos and Cronus, seem to be the essential Titans in Greek mythology; they are the only ones mentioned by name in Homer's *Iliad*.<sup>102</sup> Tertullian<sup>103</sup> quotes lines 108-110 of Sib. Or. 3, however, in his version, Cronus is replaced with Saturn due to the Latin translation.

In his book, 'Geography in early Judaism and Christianity: the Book of Jubilees'<sup>104</sup>, Scott points out an important and hitherto overlooked similarity between the Table of Nations tradition in both Jubilees 8-9 and Sib. Or. 3 worthy of further research and investigation. Gauger<sup>105</sup> has already noted, with regard to lines 108-110 of Sib.Or. 3, that the three sons of Noah may have inspired the naming of three sons of Uranus and Gaia whereas in other accounts of the Titanomachy only two sons occur, namely Cronus and Iapetos.<sup>106</sup> This shall be elaborated on in light of the Table of Nations tradition.

The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 is the most influential text with regard to biblical geography. Gen 10 describes the distribution of the earth among the three sons of Noah. The table of nations in Genesis 10 gave rise to an influential tradition and to geographical conceptions in Ancient Judaism. The original table of nations in Genesis 10 is the main source for later Jewish and Christian geographical and ethnographical outlines.<sup>107</sup> The Genesis 10 tradition itself was subject to various changes until the biblical canon was closed to meet historical circumstances and was already re-edited by the Bible itself, namely in 1 Chronicles 1, as well as in Jubilees 8-9, Genesis Apocryphon 12-17 (1QapGen), and Josephus' *Antiquities*<sup>108</sup>. Along with the Tower of Babel narrative, Genesis 10 marks the end of the primeval history and serves as a transition to the history of the patriarchs. Generally speaking, it lays out the division of the portions of the earth among Noah's sons Japheth (10:2-5), Ham (6-20), and Shem (21-31). Within the genealogy, Genesis 10 includes several pieces of geographical information listing the boundaries of the ethnic territories and those of Canaan in particular, which would have a lasting and decisive impact on later Jewish tradition. Thus Deut 32:8-9 strongly implies that during the original division of the world among the nations, God established Israel's right to the land of Canaan/Israel. Jub 8-10 probably picks up on this.<sup>109</sup>

The book of Jubilees was written sometime between 164-150 BCE and is known to have circulated in Qumran.<sup>110</sup> Jubilees 8-9 is a thorough rewriting of Genesis 10 and exhibits the continuous veracity and abiding influence of the biblical world view. It

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Ulansey, 1989, 103-111.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. AnthLyrGraec 8:204.1, 14:72.1, 9:525.20, 10:53.5.

<sup>101</sup> A few references point to a date after 70 CE (for instance line 324ff and possibly 350ff), however, the earliest strata of the book were probably present before.

<sup>102</sup> Homer, *Il.* 8.479.

<sup>103</sup> Tertullian, *Nat.* 2.12. 'decima, inquit, genitura hominum ex quo cataclysmus prioribus accidit, regnauit Saturnus et Titan et Iapetus, Terrae et Caeli fortissimi fillii.'

<sup>104</sup> Scott, 1996.

<sup>105</sup> Gauger, 1998, 492. Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 208: '... but was his [Iapetos] name chosen because it also recalls the biblical Japheth?' Cf. Witte, 1998, 105-107. Cf. also pp. 212, 217.

<sup>106</sup> In Homer's *Iliad* a cosmological tripartite division of the world can be found. The world is divided by lot and dominion is assigned to Zeus (heaven), Poseidon (earth and sea), and Hades (underworld), Homer, *Il.* 15, 187-193.

<sup>107</sup> Scott, 2003, 23.

<sup>108</sup> *Ant* 1.122-47.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Scott, 2003, 35.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. VanderKam, 2001, 21.

contains a detailed account of the division of the earth and the distribution of its parts among the sons of Noah. It describes the nations surrounding Israel – with Israel in the centre of the world – reaching from the Garden of Eden in the east to Gadir (Cádiz) in Spain in the west.<sup>111</sup> Jubilees 8-9 in fact contains two accounts of the division of the earth. First Noah divides the earth by lot among his three sons: Shem receives Asia with mount Zion as the naval of the world (8:12-21), Ham receives Africa (8:22-24), and Japheth receives Europe (8:25-30). The geographical features and boundaries of these portions are then explained painstakingly. In the second account (9:1-15) the sons of Noah divide their portions among their own sons. Noah then commands his sons and grandsons to swear an oath not to violate each others boundaries. The oath given by the three sons not to violate the boundaries gives Jub. 8-9 an ‘apocalyptic orientation’<sup>112</sup> inasmuch as there appears ‘to be a connection between the violation of territorial boundaries and the future divine judgement by sword and fire’<sup>113</sup>. With that in mind, current dominions like the Hellenistic or Roman empires would be subject to the coming judgment.<sup>114</sup> The oath of the three sons and its breaking recur in the Sibyl’s account of the Titanomachy. We shall observe the influence of the Table of Nations tradition with regard to the Sibyl’s geography throughout the course of the book. Our focus for now shall be the division of the earth among the three Titan sons, who are modelled on the sons of Noah.

According to Scott, the Sibyl recounts the division of the earth among the three sons of Noah in a similar way to that of Jubilees ‘albeit with a thick overlay of Greek mythology’<sup>115</sup>. Yet he also correctly notes that the Third Sibyl does not aim to be an exposition of the Table of Nations.<sup>116</sup>

In the Third Sibyl, as in Gen and Jub., the earth is into three territories according to the three sons of Gaia and Uranus, namely Cronus, Titan, and Iapetos (110-114). Iapetos is borrowed from Hesiod<sup>117</sup> and is again equivalent to the biblical Japheth.<sup>118</sup> In the Third Sibyl Iapetos ‘facilitates the connection between the Greek myth and the Table of Nations of Genesis 10’<sup>119</sup>. However, the Sibyl is not the only one to attest a relationship between the Titans and the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. In Pseudo-Eupolemus’ account<sup>120</sup> we find another interesting amalgamation of the Titan myth and the Table of Nations.

According to Pseudo-Eupolemus the Babylonians hold that Cronus was the father of Canaan, the father of the Phoenicians, who was the father of Cush (=Ethiopia) and Mizraim (=Egypt). Hence Cronus occupies a position analogous to that of Ham in Genesis 10:6 who is the father of Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan while Titan is analogues to Shem. ‘Phrases such as “the Babylonians say,” “but the Greeks say” [...] suggest that Pseudo-Eupolemus made use of Babylonian and Greek works.’<sup>121</sup> Wacholder argues that it cannot be determined ‘[w]hether Pseudo-Eupolemus was the first to fuse the biblical account with the Greek sources or whether he was indebted to an older tradition’<sup>122</sup> already. Eusebius, quoting Pseudo-Eupolemus, furthermore states that ‘the city of Babylon was first founded by those who were saved from the flood [...]

<sup>111</sup> Scott, 1995, 15.

<sup>112</sup> Scott, 2003, 35.

<sup>113</sup> Scott, 2003, 35.

<sup>114</sup> Scott, 2003, 35.

<sup>115</sup> Scott, 1995, 36.

<sup>116</sup> Scott, 1995, 36.

<sup>117</sup> Hesiod, Theog. 18, 134, 507, 746.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Scott, 2002, 37.

<sup>119</sup> Scott, 2003, 37.

<sup>120</sup> Apud Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.17.9. The anonymous Samaritan author commonly designated as Pseudo-Eupolemus is thought to have flourished in a Syrian-Palestinian setting in the mid-second century BCE. The terminus a quo is provided by Berossus’ *Babylonica*, a source used by Pseudo-Eupolemus written after 293-292 BCE. Both fragments were first preserved by Alexander Polyhistor who flourished in the mid-first century, providing the terminus ante quem. Cf. Holladay, 1983, 159. Cf. Berossus apud Josephus, Ant. 1.158 (=FGH 680, F 6). Whether or not Pseudo-Eupolemus is directly dependent on Berossus is disputed though, see Wacholder, 1963, 92, 102; Holladay, 1983, 159f.

<sup>121</sup> Wacholder, 1963, 88.

<sup>122</sup> Wacholder, 1963, 88.

they were the giants (γίγαντες) and built the well-known tower.<sup>123</sup> The pre-deluvian account in Genesis 6:1-4, however, tells us that the giants (LXX γίγαντες) were the ones responsible for the flood in the first place. In Pseudo-Eupolemus' account, on the other hand, they are Noah's descendants. It is therefore safe to assume that he borrowed the giants from Greek rather than Jewish tradition. 'In a typical Hellenistic fashion, Pseudo-Eupolemus utilised exegesis to fuse biblical traditions with pagan mythological accounts.'<sup>124</sup> The fact that his usage of mythological traditions is drawn from biblical, Greek, and Babylonian traditions is widely acknowledged.<sup>125</sup> However, the link between these traditions probably goes beyond Pseudo-Eupolemus or Alexander Polyhistor for that matter. Iapetos was originally related to or identical with the biblical Japheth and Hesiod's cosmogony was not unlike similar Ancient Near Eastern traditions.<sup>126</sup>

It has become evident that the Sibyl's account is not unique in combining Greek mythology and biblical genealogy. Apparently, both were influenced by one another long before the Third Sibyl was written. The Sibyl drew from traditions that were already available to her and formulated them in her own way.

It is obvious that Sib. Or. 3 draws from common Jewish traditions, namely the division of the inhabited world among the three sons of Noah and the judgement of the nations. In contrast with Jubilees or the Genesis Apocryphon, however, the Sibyl mingles Jewish and Greek creation mythology with a specific agenda. Other than Josephus' or Philo's works, for instance, her aim is not to reconcile Jewish and Greek tradition in order to make it eligible to Greeks and Jews alike but to show by the usage of euhemerisms, that the Jewish way of life and monotheism are superior to the Greek way of life and polytheism. The Titans are historicised while the sons of Noah are almost blended beyond recognition. However, the priority of Jewish tradition over against Greek mythology is evident via the destruction of the Titans at the hand of God. That the biblical characters are blended almost beyond recognition does not necessarily mean that they were not implied. After all, this was a culture in which the use of pagan myths - be it Greek or Ancient Near Eastern - was increasingly used and applied to one's own end. Pseudo Eupolemus and Artapanus had tackled the same issue by attributing double or even triple names to the patriarchs.<sup>127</sup>

The first Sibylline Oracle, which is an interpretation of Book Three, understood the implication that Uranus corresponds to Noah, and has drawn out the further implication that his three Titan sons correspond to Shem, Ham, and Japheth, which she mentions immediately after the flood account.<sup>128</sup>

### 2.4.2.3 The Table of Nations tradition and the map of the Sibyl

The Sibyl's relation to the Table of Nations can also be seen with regard to her geography. In the first century CE, Josephus updated the nomenclature of the nations in Genesis 10 to those current in his own days and attributed the change of names to the Greeks.<sup>129</sup> A three-way division of the world, corresponding to the three continents, and corresponding to the areas occupied by the descendants of Noah's three sons, can be found in both Josephus and Jubilees.<sup>130</sup> The Third Sibyl includes a few formal geographical features common to those in Jubilees and ancient Graeco-Roman geography for that matter: the existence of three

<sup>123</sup> Apud Eusebeius, Praep. ev. 9.17.2, Holladay.

<sup>124</sup> Wacholder, 1963, 91. Cf. Artap. 1-3 (apud Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.18.1); Cleodorus-Malchus, FGH 727 F1; Theodotus, FGH 732 F 1.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Holladay, 1983, 157.

<sup>126</sup> Wacholder, 1963, 93. Cf. n. 69 there.

<sup>127</sup> Ps.-Eupolemus, FGH 724 F 1; Artapanus, FGH 726 F 3.

<sup>128</sup> Sib. Or. 1.293-296. Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 216f.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Ant 1.122ff.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Franxman, 1979, 93-122.

continents namely Asia, Europe and Libya (=Africa); the orientation on the east<sup>131</sup>, the merism 'all sea and all land'<sup>132</sup> to describe the world as a whole; and the references to several seas such as the Oceanus<sup>133</sup>, Lake Maeotis<sup>134</sup>, the Western Sea<sup>135</sup>, the Tanais River, which is the traditional boundary between Asia and Europe<sup>136</sup>, and the reference to Mount Sinai<sup>137</sup>. It is very probable that the Sibyl's mental map was, at least to a certain extent, influenced by the Table of Nations tradition. At the same time, its influence was probably not as important as Scott would make us believe. Some of the aspects and nations he links to the Table of Nations seem to be incidental. The division of the earth into three parts is, however, a feature that does not occur in Hesiod's theogony so the Sibyl cannot have copied it from there. Rather it seems likely that the Sibyl modelled the Titanomachy on the distribution of the earth among the sons of Noah in Genesis.

We shall also see that the Sibyl exhibits a universal interest. Time and again she addresses the entire earth (ἴστατο καὶ μ' ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ πᾶσαν γαῖαν).<sup>138</sup> The influence of the Table of Nations tradition can also be seen very clearly in the prophecy of universal disasters in Sib. Or. 3.489-544.<sup>139</sup> The oracle lists various nations known from the Table of Nations according to their arrangement on the compass and on the table. In lines 517-519 she heralds that God will send afflictions on as many nations as inhabit the earth (πᾶσιν γάρ, ὅσοι χθόνα ναιετάουσιν)<sup>140</sup>. We can also observe that the Sibyl uses the Greek nomenclature that we know from Josephus' account.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Polybius, Hist. 3.37.2; Strabo, Geogr. 1.4.7-8; 2.5.26.

<sup>132</sup> Sib. Or. 3.271, 323.

<sup>133</sup> Sib. Or. 3.223; equivalent to the sea of Me'at in Jub. 8:27; 9:8.

<sup>134</sup> Sib. Or. 3.338.

<sup>135</sup> Sib. Or. 3.176; equivalent to the Great Sea in Jub. 8:15; 9:6. In the MT the Mediterranean is called both the Great Sea (cf. Josh 1:4) and the Western Sea (cf. Deut 11:24). Furthermore, the Hebrew word יָם means both 'sea' and 'west' (as from a palestinian perspective the sea is to the west).

<sup>136</sup> In line 338 the Sibyl predicts that the deep-eddy (βαθυδίνης) Tanais will leave Lake Maeotis. Lake Maeotis is equivalent to the Sea of Me'at in Jub. 8:27; 9:8. The Tanais River is again equivalent to the Tina river in Jub. 8:12.16; 9:8. Curiously enough, the account of the Sibyl states that Tanais will leave Lake Maeotis while the account in Jubilees claims that Tina runs into the sea of Me'at (Jub. 8:12). Apparently, the same geography is presupposed by Sib. Or. 3 and Jub (Scott, 1995, 37 n. 163). In Jubilees and Josephus' version of the Table of Nations, the Tina River is used as boundary between Asia and Europe (Ant. 1.122; Jub. 8.12, 16. 28; 9:8; Strabo, Geogr. 1.4). Tanais is the ancient Greek name for the river Don. Tanais appears in ancient Greek sources as the name of the river and of a city on it, situated in the Maeotian marshes (Herodotus Hist. 4.20-21, Strabo, Geogr. 1.4, 7.1). See also comments on Section IV.

<sup>137</sup> Sib. Or. 3.256. However, the Sibyl does not describe it nor Jerusalem and the temple as the centre of the earth.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. lines 163-164; 298-299; 491.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Scott, 1995, 39.

<sup>140</sup> See comment there.

<sup>141</sup> Ant 1.122ff.

## 2.5 Conclusion: The relativisation of dominion in the past (156-158a)

156 καὶ τότε Τιτάνεσσι θεὸς κακὸν ἐγγυάλιξεν.  
 157 καὶ πᾶσαι γενεαὶ Τιτάνων ἡδὲ Κρόνοιο  
 158a κάτθανον.

And then God put the Titans in the hand of evil.  
 And the whole family of Titan and Cronus died.

The account of the Titanomachy concludes with the end of the Titans and a list of kingdoms that ruled after them. God is imagined as the initiator of events when it says that 'God put the Titans in the hands of evil'. Everything that happens is imagined as being directly (or indirectly) controlled by God. This fits the euhemerism that the Sibyl used earlier. The reign of the Titans did not just end; it was put to an end by God whereas in Hesiod's theogony it ended with Zeus' victory over the Titans and the establishment of his dominion over his siblings. To the Sibyl, the Titans were by no means gods but mortal kings, which is why 'the βασιλ-root recurs obsessively'<sup>142</sup>. Euhemerus was so appealing to the author of the Third Sibyl precisely because his own interest was to explain that the Greek gods were human kings.<sup>143</sup>

The Sibyl's aim is to relativise past mythological rule as powerless in comparison to that of God. She makes use of Greek creation myths not to reconcile Greek and Jewish thought but to show the audience, which for now can be assumed as a Greek-speaking Jewish Diaspora community in the Mediterranean rim, that the so called gods of the predominant culture surrounding them are in fact as powerless as any mortal men over against the countenance of God. Throughout the book the Sibyl will substantiate that God is the sole true ruler who will make all warfare cease and manifest his own eternal dominion on earth for the righteous who will survive his judgement.

This section serves as an introduction to the rest of the book while at the same time rooting 'the [T]hird Sibyl in universal rather than Jewish history'<sup>144</sup>. The Sibyl recasts primeval history from Genesis by combining it with the Greek myth of the Titan War. By doing so she is able to show her intended readers that the mighty Greek Titans were powerless against the might of μέγας θεός.<sup>145</sup> In the Sibyl's narrative, the Titans and their dominion are the result of the confusion of tongues at Babel. The world already consisted of divided kingdoms when Titan, Cronus, and Iapetos were kings (107-110) each within their own territory. However when they tried to take each other's territories, God punished them by bringing their reign to

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 214.

<sup>143</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 214.

<sup>144</sup> Collins, 1987, 430.

<sup>145</sup> Line 97 cf. 156. See also: Part III: The image of God.

an end. In classical Greek mythology it is Zeus who emerges victorious from the Titanomachy and takes up his position as father of the gods on Mount Olympus. In the Sibyl's version, Zeus' role is inevitably diminished and none of the Titan kings nor their descendants become sovereign. It is God who is portrayed as the sole ruler to begin with. The notion becomes a recurring theme throughout the book. Kingdoms come and go and most of them will be destroyed at the hands of God who is the only and true sovereign.

The primary concern of the passage is the theme of kingship, it leads straight into the list of kingdoms in lines 158b-161 and in the longer term 'it prepares for the predominant concern of the rest of the book with the final, [eschatological] kingdom'<sup>146</sup>. It is the Sibyl's main concern to anchor herself in universal history by drawing on Greek mythology.<sup>147</sup>

We also learn that the Sibyl draws from traditions known from other texts at the turn of the era, e.g. the Table of Nations as we have it in Jubilees, 1QapGen or Josephus. She also knows of geographical perceptions of her time, such as the division of the earth into three portions, i.e. continents.

In the next section, the Sibyl predicts the things that, from her point of view, are yet to come. Her account of primeval history ends with the ending of the Titan reign and the beginning of war for all mortals. With the divided kingdoms, the tripartite division of the earth and the beginning of war the Sibyl introduces and lays out the horizontal line. The horizontal line is met with the vertical line as God destroys the Titans and makes way for a new generation of kingdoms. In the following passages the Sibyl will continue her survey of the horizontal line in her description of universal history. She starts out with a list of kingdoms and then proceeds to the history of the people of God in particular. When the people of God are entrusted with the law, the vertical line is further defined.

## 2.6 The World Empires: the beginning universal history (158b-161)

158b... αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα χρόνου περιτελλομένοιο  
 159 Αἰγύπτου βασιλείον ἐγείρατο, εἶτα τὸ Περσῶν  
 160 Μήδων Αἰθιοπῶν τε καὶ Ἀσσυρίης Βαβυλῶνος,  
 161 εἶτα Μακεδονίων, πάλιν Αἰγύπτου, τότε Ῥώμης.

Yet when time came around  
 the kingdom of Egypt rose up, next that of the Persians  
 the Medes, the Ethiopians and that of Assyria Babylon,  
 then that of the Macedonians, that of Egypt again, then of Rome.

<sup>146</sup> Collins, 1974, 26. Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 214.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 218.



Line 158b continues where 158a left off. With the Titans destroyed, lines 158b-161 serve as an epilogue to the Titanomachy. The Sibyl continues her survey of universal history, listing a chain of empires that ruled after the Titans had perished. These kingdoms are all on the horizontal line, there is no mention of divine intervention or interaction. Other than in the book of Daniel, these kingdoms are not established by God.<sup>148</sup>

From the point of view of the Sibyl, the Titans were only deified kings. It therefore makes sense that their reign was followed by that of other nations rather than gods. In fact, primeval history as told by the Third Sibyl serves as an introduction to the rest of the book. In lines 199-201 the judgment of the Titans is repeated briefly.<sup>149</sup> According to Scott, the kingdoms listed are arranged according to the tripartite division of the earth among the sons of Gaia and Uranus - or the sons of Noah respectively.<sup>150</sup>

The list of kingdoms introduces a new period of time which is evident from the conjunction *ἔπειτα* (thereafter, then), i.e. sometime soon after the Titans had died. It is expressed in other passages of the book that the Graeco-Macedonians are descendants of the Titans.<sup>151</sup> The list of kingdoms serves as a transition from primeval history to the part of history that concerns the Sibyl. The empires listed are Egypt, Persia, Mede, Ethiopia, Babylon/Assyria, Macedonia, Egypt again (*πάλιν*) and then (*τότε*) Rome. Rome's position at the end of the list infers that Rome was still the active power at the time that the oracle was written. A clear distinction between Assyria and Babylon more have already been blurred at the time of the Sibyl. In 4 Macc. 13:9 (approximately second century CE)<sup>152</sup>, for instance, Daniel and his friends are alluded to as three young Assyrian men.<sup>153</sup> The book of Daniel, however, is set in Babylon at the time of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>154</sup> In Sib. 8.7 the phrase *Ἀσσυρία Βαβυλῶν* can also be found in a list of kingdoms.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Dan 2:44. See also comment on lines 767ff.

<sup>149</sup> According to the manuscript reading of line 200 (cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 195), the Titans will be punished because of their evil deeds against their father Cronus and their mother Rhea for that matter. Line 201 states the reason for their punishment with a *οὐνεκα* phrase (*οὐνεκά τοι δῆσάν τε Κρόνον καὶ μητέρα κεδνήν*) - namely the imprisonment of their parents. The Sibyl often makes use of *οὐνεκα* and *τοῦνεκα* in connection with *ἀντί*. Cf. lines 330-3, 495-503, 601-605 where she adheres to the biblical when-then pattern. Cf. also comment on line 266-7 below.

<sup>150</sup> Scott (1995, 38) argues that the verb *περιτέλλομαι* in line 158 implies a cyclic course of time and therefore a cyclical nature of the reign of the descendants of the sons of Noah according to the sequence Ham, Shem, and Japheth.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. lines 202-4, 383, 403.

<sup>152</sup> See discussion in deSilva, 2006, xivff.

<sup>153</sup> *Ἀδελφικῶς ἀποθάνωμεν, ἀδελφοί, περὶ τοῦ νόμου· μιμησώμεθα τοὺς τρεῖς τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσσυρίας νεανίσκους, οἱ τῆς ἰσοπολίτιδος καμίνου κατεφρόνησαν*. The adjective *ἰσοπολίτιδος* poses some difficulties. The LSJ adds the reference to 4 Macc 13:9 with the remark 'sense unclear'. NRSV renders it as 'same ordeal'. For discussion see deSilva, 2006, 206f.

<sup>154</sup> Dan 1:1.

<sup>155</sup> Sib. 8 probably borrows from Sib. 3 here.

The Sibyl draws on the scheme of world empires<sup>156</sup> (which is familiar from the Book of Daniel and was also a propagandistic theme in Graeco-Roman literature) in order to demonstrate that in the end there will be only one divine *kingdom*, superior to any of the others and God will be its sovereign king.<sup>157</sup>

The word used for 'kingdom' is βασιλείον, which in this form only has a single occurrence in Sib.Or. 3 and is equivalent to the more common term βασιλεία.<sup>158</sup> In the preceding passage on the Titans, the root βασιλ- was used extensively. Hence the transition from the Titan War to the list of kingdoms is evident. Human kingship (over against divine kingship) is the central theme of the entire passage.

According to Buitenwerf<sup>159</sup> the second reign of Egypt is that of the Ptolemies.. The author divides the empires periodically assuming one empire at a time. This presumption is obvious from the recurring usage of the word τότε (then) and especially πάλιν (again) in line 161. The second reign of Egypt clearly refers to the Ptolemaic dynasty, which was the last stable dynasty in the Mediterranean during the Roman expansion.<sup>160</sup> This would explain its importance for the author especially in opposition to Rome. The Egyptian king of Greek descent in line 192 is said to be the king of the seventh reign and, would therefore be a Ptolemy since the seventh kingdom is no other than 'that of Egypt again'.<sup>161</sup> The assumption that Persia, Mede, Ethiopia and Babylon/Assyria could also have been simultaneous empires is not necessary.<sup>162</sup> The conjunctions τε and καί merely serve as connectors so that no sufficient conclusion can be drawn from them. There is no reason to believe at this point that the empires mentioned are not a chronological sequence.

According to Collins, the division of history into ten periods is a typical Sibylline feature hence he counts ten empires (including that of the Titans and the eschatological one).<sup>163</sup> Though this is unmistakably true for the other Sibylline books, it is not so explicitly stated in the Third Sibyl. Collins argues that if the kingdom of Cronus is presupposed and the

---

<sup>156</sup> In fact, the theme of empires can be observed throughout the book and plays an important role in the Sibyl's eschatology. The Sibyl's main concern is the current rulers and the misery they bring upon the people. The middle section of the book, for instance, is largely devoted to the Roman dominion in the Mediterranean, with special emphasis on Asia Minor, which reflects the situation between the conquest of Pompey in 63 BCE and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE.

<sup>157</sup> See comments on lines 767ff.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Panayiotou, 62f. Cf. Sib. Or. 7.205, T. Sim. 8:3, T. Jud. 17:6, 23:1, T. Jos. 9:2, Let. Aris. 1:98, 3 Macc 3:28, Pss. Sol. 17:4, 6. See also the discussion on the terminology in line 767.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 177.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 189.

<sup>161</sup> The identity of the seventh king of Egypt has been the matter of debate for the Third Sibyl. For Collins it has been the major argument to locate the text in Egypt. See comments on line 192-195, 314-18, 608-9.

<sup>162</sup> Contra Buitenwerf, 2003, 118.

<sup>163</sup> Collins, 1984, 354.

messianic kingdom is expected we have a list of 10 rather than eight kingdoms.<sup>164</sup> However if we take the division of the world among Cronus' sons into account, the ten-fold scheme does not hold up. I therefore propose that the actual number of kingdoms is of lesser importance here than in other Sibyls. In addition this enumeration would be incongruent with the seventh king/reign of Egypt. The question is then not why the Sibyl has a certain number of kingdoms but on what grounds she has chosen them.

The closest analogy to the Sibyl's list is probably the four-fold empire scheme in the Book of Daniel. However, the Sibyl, other than Daniel, does not use the particular number four. Instead, she lists eight kingdoms. Sibyl exhibits her indebtedness to Daniel with the inclusion of Medes. Daniel, on the other hand, adapted his scheme from Graeco-Roman tradition (see excursus below). The sequence Assyria-Medes is also attested in the book of Tobit (14:4) and that of Assyria, Medes, and Persia in the Testament of Naphtali.<sup>165</sup> The latter is curious as the line of succession is continued by Elamites, Galatians, Chaldeans, and Syrians who each in turn possessed the twelve tribes in captivity. The example from T. Naph. shows that the Sibyl is not alone in expanding the list of succession.

#### **Excursus: The development of the empire scheme**

The question arises according to which criteria the Third Sibyl chose the empires she did. The theme itself is common in biblical and Judeo-Christian literature<sup>166</sup>, the most prominent example being the four-empire scheme in the book of Daniel (Dan 2 and 7:7) of which the fourth empire will be succeeded by an everlasting divine kingdom. 'Within the chronological restraint of the Book of Daniel, the fourth kingdom can be no later than that of Greece (despite the long-standing tradition that identified it with Rome, beginning with Josephus'<sup>167</sup>. However the idea of such world empires is far older than the Book of Daniel. It can roughly be traced back to the twenty-third century BCE in Mesopotamia. The idea of a rulership that encompassed the entire known world was expressed in Mesopotamia in various royal epithets.<sup>168</sup> By the ninth century BCE the title "ruler of the four regions" had become part of the Assyrian royal title. The claim for world rulership and attaining it went hand in hand with successful military expansion.<sup>169</sup> The episode on Nebukadnezzar's dream about the four empires in Dan 2 - and particularly the 'iron empire' (Dan 2:39) which 'will rule over the entire earth'-reflects the claim of ancient near eastern (and Hellenistic) rulers to world dominion.

Under the influence of the ideas and claims of ancient near eastern rulers, the idea of successive world empires was developed at the beginning of the fifth century BCE and eventually became an ideology. The first threefold scheme (Assyria-Medes-Persia) of this kind can be found in the account of Herodotus (fifth century BCE).<sup>170</sup> In Herodotus'

<sup>164</sup> Collins, 1984, 354.

<sup>165</sup> T. Naph. 5.8. The Testament of Naphtali lists Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Chaldeans, and Syrians. Since Syria appears as the last active power and there is no reference to the persecution under Antiochus IV, the passage can be dated between 198 (begin of Seleucid rule in Palestine) and 175 BCE (Antiochus IV). A portion of T. Naph. has also been found in Qumran (4Q215). Cf. Becker, 2001, 25.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. 1. En. 89ff; Apoc. El. 1.3; 4 Ezra 11.40; 2 Bar 39.

<sup>167</sup> Collins, 1993, 166. Cf. Josephus, Ant 10.209.

<sup>168</sup> Wiesehöfer, 2003.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Renger, "Empire, concept of empire," DNP, n.p. Cited 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010. Online: [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=bnp\\_e1221020](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=bnp_e1221020).

<sup>170</sup> Herodotus, Hist. 1.95, 130. Cf. Wiesehöfer, 2003, 391-396.

account only the Persian Empire was able to gain rulership over all of Asia (and, in the process, incorporate the entire territorial heritage of the previous empires) which no kingdom had achieved before. The rise and fall of empires was, however, linked substantially to the moral qualities of the rulers, not dissimilar to the assessment of the kings of Israel and Judea in the Hebrew Bible. Herodotus attributes 520 years of dominion to the Assyrians, 128 to the Medes, and the ultimate reign to the Persians, albeit 'the inclusion of the Medes certainly reflects a Persian point of view'.<sup>171</sup> The scheme is most likely borrowed from Persian royal ideology. It resurfaces half a century later in the account of Ctesias who lived at the court of Artaxerxes II in Persia.<sup>172</sup> Inscriptions of Darius I in Persepolis and Naqš-e Rostam speak of him as "king of kings" and "king of all lands and nations" taking into account the entire inhabited world as he knew it.<sup>173</sup>

Ctesias, other than Herodotus, more clearly expressed the 'three-empire-scheme', and also attributes the rulership over all of Asia to the Assyrian empire. After the destruction of Nineveh in 612 BCE the topos was probably adapted by the victorious Medes but there is no contemporary evidence to prove this. It is then again overtly expressed in Persian ideology that after the Achaemenid empire had overthrown the Medes in 550 BCE: in Persian royal ideology the king ultimately became the worldly representative of the creator God. The 'three-kingdom' sequence of Assyria, Media, and Persia is plausibly explained as the official Achaemenid view of history, intended to establish the legitimacy of Persia as the heir to the earlier empires of the Near East.<sup>174</sup>

After the downfall of the Achaemenid Empire at the hand of Alexander the Great in 334 BCE the idea of a four-fold scheme was developed and transformed as can be observed in the Book of Daniel<sup>175</sup> and later into a five-fold scheme in Roman historiography.<sup>176</sup>

After Alexander's death in 323 BCE his empire was fought over by his successors (the Diadochi) and eventually broke apart into the three Diadochian states of the Ptolemies in Egypt, the Seleucids in southwest Asia, and the Antigonides in Macedonia. With the latter being the weakest, Europe now played a minor role within Hellenistic conscience. For later historiography Alexander and the Diadochi represented the uncontested fourth world empire. According to the historian Arrian (ca. 86 - 146 CE)<sup>177</sup>, Alexander himself had claimed succession of the Persian Empire and the hegemony over Asia. However the Diadochi remained intruders to native oppositional circles. It was in this climate that anti-Hellenistic bias began to flourish. Already after the battle of Magnesia in 190 BCE eschatological expectations of a fifth empire that would rise from Asia might have developed among oppositional circles.<sup>178</sup> This was already argued by the influential essay by Joseph Swain in 1940 who claimed that the sequence found in Daniel must be older than the Book of Daniel.<sup>179</sup> This view remains presumptuous, the Roman authors may have just extended the four-fold scheme they found in the works of Greek historians.<sup>180</sup> However the Persian Bahman Yasht implies a fourth kingdom reminiscent of Alexander's conquest which may have been developed specifically for anti-Hellenistic propaganda.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Collins, 1993, 166.

<sup>172</sup> The fragments of Ctesias are preserved in Diodorus Siculus, 2.1-34.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Wiesehöfer, 2007, 34-40.

<sup>174</sup> Kratz, 1991, 198-212.

<sup>175</sup> Babylon-Mede-Persia-Greece/Macedonia – though with a negative connotation and the hope for a change of that situation (Dan 2).

<sup>176</sup> Alexander proclaimed himself king over Asia and was now ruler of both Europe and Asia. Alexander added the *imperium Asiae* (Pompey Troge apud Justinian, Epit. 11.14.6) to the *imperium Europae* (Justinian, Epit. 12.16.5) and who was the first rightly to be called *rex terrarum omnium et mundi* ('king of all countries and the world': Justinian, Epit. 12.16.9).

<sup>177</sup> Arrian, Anab. 2.3.6, 7.6, 14.9, 3.9.6, 4.7.5.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Koch, 1997, 16.

<sup>179</sup> Joseph Ward Swain, "The Theory of the Four Monarchies Opposition History under the Roman Empire," *Classical Philology* 35, no. 1 (1940): 1-21. This view was questioned by Mendels (1981) who argues that the topos can only be found in Rome in the late first century BCE.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. Collins, 1993, 167.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Eddy, 1961, 19.

From the first century BCE onwards (after Pompey's campaign in the East) Rome appears as the uncontested fifth world empire in the chain of empires demarked by Roman historians.<sup>182</sup> The oriental series of four empires, expanded to include Rome in acknowledgement of the existing situation and of the *Imperium Romanum* as an everlasting empire and established for the sake of this last empire, can also be found later in Tacitus<sup>183</sup>, and in Appian<sup>184</sup>. In the account of Pompey Trogue<sup>185</sup> the Romans and the Parthians became the successors of the *imperium Macedonicum*.

The five-fold scheme with Rome as the last and unparalleled empire is commonplace in Roman historiography from the end of the first century BCE onwards.<sup>186</sup> Rome's claim to universal rulership is often expressed in Graeco-Roman historiography. From Polybius (second century BCE) we learn that even though the Persians and the Macedonians had conquered large parts of the known world their conquests were merely partial. 'But the Romans have subjected to their rule not portions, but nearly the whole of the world [and possess an empire which is not only immeasurably greater than any which preceded it, but not fear rivalry in the future].'<sup>187</sup>

The four-fold scheme in Daniel 2 and 7 is most likely based on the Herodotean sequence which was itself of Persian origin. However Daniel replaces Assyria with Babylon due to its Jewish background.<sup>188</sup> The fourth empire in Daniel is a reference to the Hellenistic kingdoms of Alexander and his successors. However under the impression of the religious persecution under Antiochus IV the fourth empire ultimately receives a negative assessment while at the same time the hope for a messianic king grows who is supposed to overthrow the empire and erect a kingdom of God.<sup>189</sup>

To conclude, the topos of four empires with Rome as the ultimate fifth empire first emerged in the second half of the first century BCE in Greek and Roman literature. Thereon it was commonly used in various forms by the friends and enemies of Rome. Mendels suggests that '[t]he stimulus to turn this theory into a propagandistic topos could have arisen when Rome began to interfere extensively in the regions which belonged to the first three empires of the topos, namely in the first century BCE'.<sup>190</sup>

Buitenwerf rejects the idea to read Sib. Or. 3 against this particular background altogether because 'the author does not seem to follow any given traditional pattern'.<sup>191</sup> However, this only proves that the author did not merely copy from Daniel. It seems as though the author had the Graeco-Roman succession theme in mind and expanded and adapted it to his own needs without following a given pattern too strictly. The fact that he adds more kingdoms to his lists only shows that these were of importance to him. This importance shall be examined.

Even though it is impossible to determine whether or not the Sibyl had literary predecessors to her account of empires, she seems to recast a motif that had become a commonplace by the Roman era, even though she deviates from the order laid out by either Daniel or Herodotus.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Cassius Dio, Hist. 37.21.2; Plutarch, Pomp. 45.5-7.

<sup>183</sup> Tacitus, Hist. 5.8.

<sup>184</sup> Appian, Praef. 9.

<sup>185</sup> Apud Justinian, Epit. 43.1.2.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Mendels, 1981, 337.

<sup>187</sup> Polybius, Hist. 1.2 (Paton, LCL). For further reading see: Kratz, 1991; Wiesehöfer, 2003; Mendels, 1981; Koch, 1997.

<sup>188</sup> The empires are denoted in a negative sense. Judea's experience with Babylon was more recent than that with Assyria. Besides, the book of Daniel is set in Babylon.

<sup>189</sup> It should be noted that Kratz regards the eschatological element in Daniel 2 as secondary, added after the collection of the Aramaic tales had already taken shape (cf. Kratz, 1991, 61).

<sup>190</sup> Mendels, 1981, 337.

<sup>191</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 179 n. 1. However, Buitenwerf explicitly refers to the often proposed Iranian background of the empire scheme rather than to the ANE or Greek-Roman background.

## 2.7 The empires and the Table of Nations tradition

Read in light of the previous section on the Titanomachy, another important aspect comes to the fore. We have already observed the similarities between the Table of Nations tradition in lines 110ff and the Book of Jubilees. The earth was divided into three parts and distributed among Cronus, Titan, and to Iapetos, who is equivalent to the biblical Japheth. When the three sons of Uranus transgressed their oath not to violate the respective boundaries, war broke out between their families, the first war for all mortals (154-155). The list of kingdoms shows that struggle continued long after God had put the Titans in the hands of evil (156). According to Scott<sup>192</sup>, the kingdoms reigned according to a tripartite cyclic sequence: Ham, Shem, Japheth (Cronus, Titan, and Iapetos respectively). Egypt belongs to the portion of Ham, Persia to that of Shem, Mede to that of Japheth and so forth. The descendants of Ham begin each of the cycles (Egypt - Ethiopia - Egypt). The implied final kingdom is that of God (not of the Jews) which illustrates the political and theological nature of the Sibyl. Scott's assumption is not unfounded: the empires listed by the Sibyl may have been influenced by an established Table of Nations tradition in contemporary Judaism that had updated the names of the nations in Gen 10 to contemporaneous equivalents. In addition, a geographical sequence is to be expected after an account of the distribution of the world amongst Noah's sons. The Sibyl is again placing her prophecy within a broader framework of universal rather than local (or Jewish) history. Her list is essentially based on the Roman five-fold scheme of world empires (Assyria/Babylonia, Mede, Persia, Macedonia/Greece, Rome) which in turn derives from a three- or four-fold scheme laid out first by the historian Ctesias which was then adapted by the Greeks. In Lactantius the preservation of such a sequence can be observed. He lists the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Assyrians saying that once their reigns were completed, power passed on to Rome.<sup>193</sup>

The Sibyl's intention is entirely different from that of the Roman historians. She is familiar with the tradition of Rome being the last and superior empire and transforms it to serve own purpose. In her version, God is the only sovereign ruler. She picks up on a scheme that was popular in Graeco-Roman historiography and transforms it to her own needs. The Sibyl adds Egypt and Ethiopia to the list. The addition of Egypt probably derives from a Jewish perception of history having the Exodus in mind. Seen in that light, it is obvious why the Sibyl has the Egyptians precede the Assyrian empire as according to biblical chronology the Exodus took place centuries before the Assyrian conquest of Israel. The second Egyptian reign is that of the Ptolemies. In the Sibyl's sequence, this will be the seventh kingdom. Later

---

<sup>192</sup> Scott, 1995, 38.

<sup>193</sup> Lactantius, *Inst.* 7.15.13.

in the Book the Sibyl speaks of the seventh reign/king of Egypt who is of Greek decent. It is obvious that she identifies this with Egypt's place as seventh in the list.

Ethiopia is out of place on the list. Traditionally, Ethiopia was the southernmost corner of the inhabited earth and not such an important empire.<sup>194</sup> The inclusion of Ethiopia reflects the Sibyl's knowledge of three continents<sup>195</sup>: Assyria/Babylonia, Mede, Persia, and Egypt<sup>196</sup> belong to Asia, Macedon/Greece and Rome to Europe, and Ethiopia to Africa.<sup>197</sup> By including Ethiopia on the list, the Sibyl sums up all three continents that were known in Antiquity; its importance is geographical, not political. Later in the Book the Sibyl places the mythical enemy Gog in Ethiopia (320). Has this inspired the mention of Ethiopia in her list of empires over that of Libya which is also African? If this interpretation is correct it supports the interpretation suggested by Scott.

On top of the supposed geographical arrangement, historical sequence also plays a role. Especially Macedonia, Egypt (again), and Rome reflect the Sibyl's interest as becomes evident over the course of the book. We have already said that the mention of Rome as last in line reflects the authors' time - hence Rome was already a powerful force in the ancient world at the time the third book was compiled. The second reign of Egypt must reflect the Ptolemaic dynasty as it is positioned between Macedon and Rome and was still intact during the Roman push to the East. Before that was the reign of Alexander the Great and his successors, the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. Some of the oracles in Sib. Or. 3 contain older oracles that were directed at the Macedonian rule and against Alexander in particular. To the Sibyl, the Graeco-Macedonians (the Sibyl does not differentiate them) are descendants of the Titans.<sup>198</sup> In addition, the Greek kings are repeatedly referred to as arrogant and impious. Like the Romans after them they have caused war for the people of the Mediterranean. War is again the key

---

<sup>194</sup> Strabo on the four corners of the earth citing Ephorus (405-330 BCE): 'if we divide the regions of the heavens and of the earth into four parts, the Indians will occupy that part from which Apeliotes (the East wind) blows, the Ethiopians that part from which Notus (the South wind) blows, the Celts the part on the west, and the Scythians the part from which the north wind blows.' (Strabo, Geogr. 1.2.28 [Jones, LCL]). Cf. also Strabo 1.1.6-10. In terms of the Septuagint the earth extended from Parthia in the East to Spain in the West, and from Macedonia in the North to Ethiopia in the South. As it would be expected from the time of translation, almost all the places in the LXX are included within the boundaries of the Greek empire of Alexander the Great the kingdoms of the Diadochi. Cf. Henry A. Redpath, "The Geography of the Septuagint," *AJT* 7, no. 2 (1903): 289-307.

<sup>195</sup> By the 5th century, the inhabited world (*oikoumene*) was divided into three parts. Herodotus was already able to distinguish Africa/Libya from Asia as the third continent by at least 500 BCE. cf. Herodotus, Hist. 2.16.1; 3.96; 115; 4.41; Xenophon, Mem. 2.1.10; on the three continents and their boundaries see Strabo, Geogr. 1.4.7-8; 2.5.26; Arrian, Anab. 3.30.7-9. About four hundred years later Polybius distinguished between three continents (Asia, Libya - being the ancient name for Africa - and Europe) and lined out their respective borders and their relative position in the *oikoumene*, and both of these in relation to the inner sea. Polybius, Hist. 3.37.2.

<sup>196</sup> In antiquity Egypt was taken to be part of Asia rather than of Africa.

<sup>197</sup> The Sibyl also knows of Libya which she mentions in lines 208 and 323. Libya is the ancient name for Africa. Cf. Josephus, Ant. 1.133.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. lines 383, 403.

element that was first started by the hubris and fall of the first men. In ancient Greek tragedy, those who challenged the gods or their laws were doomed for their own downfall.<sup>199</sup> In the Third Sibylline book the rival nations are represented as hubristic. Hence each of them will be judged by God. The Sibyl's assessment of the respective nations will be the subject of the next section.

---

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Herodotus, Hist. 7.10.



### 3 Section II: Lines 162-195

*Lines 162-195*

*The nations and the people of God*

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this section we have the first appearance of the people of God in the remainder of the book. Since the Sibyl is narrating world history from creation to the *eschaton*, it becomes clear that she is interested in the role of the people of the Great God in universal world history. Therefore, she starts out with the reign of Solomon and ends with the future role of God's people. However, I will analyse what that role is exactly. The section begins with an account of the kingdom of Solomon and ends with the future role of the people of God. In between, the horizontal line is sketched and several kingdoms will reign until God intervenes and destroys them and the people of God assume their role.

Within the account of empires, the wickedness of the Macedonians and the Romans are a main theme. In contrast to the other nations mentioned in the passage, they both receive a strongly biased assessment by the Sibyl. They are described as arrogant, greedy, and as lovers of war that bring misery upon the people. The Sibyl gives us only two lines on the Macedonians but gives an extent account of the Romans right afterwards. It appears as if the Macedonians serve as predecessors to the Romans who are even more terrible and loathsome until eventually the people of the Great God will play an important role in history.

The Sibyl continues the theme of rule and the unruly claim to world dominion that started out with the Titan War in Section I of the book. The Macedonians, who are descendants of the Titans<sup>1</sup>, will come as a dreadful cloud of war over the people until they are succeeded by the even more terrible Romans. It is known from Greek and Latin authors that the Romans claimed to be the successors to the Hellenistic empire and that they saw their empire as the uncontested empire that exceeded all previous empires (Assyria, Persia, and the Hellenistic empire).<sup>2</sup> Like the Titans before them, the Greeks and Romans are bound to fall due to their hubristic claims to world dominion, their love of war and their offense of God and mankind. Eventually, the people of God will assume their allotted role and be moral guides for all mortals.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. line 403.

<sup>2</sup> See excursus in Section I.

### 3.2 Structure

162-164 Introduction formula

165-195 History from the reign of Solomon to the fall of the Roman Empire

167-170 The kingdom of Solomon

170-174 The Macedonian reign

175-191 The kingdom from the western sea

192-195 The seventh king of Egypt and the role of the people of God

### 3.3 The introduction formula (lines 162-166)

162 καὶ τότε μοι μέγαλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσι  
 163 ἵστατο καὶ μ' ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ πᾶσαν  
 164 γαῖαν καὶ βασιλεῦσι τὰ τ' ἐσόμεν' ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖναι.  
 165 καὶ μοι τοῦτο θεὸς πρῶτον νόῳ ἐγγυάλιξεν,  
 166 ὅσσοι ἀνθρώπων βασιλῆδες ἡγερέθονται<sup>3</sup>.

And then the oracle of the Great God rose in my chest  
 And commanded me to prophecy over the entire earth  
 And to give in mind to kings what will be.  
 And then God put this into my mind  
 how many kingdoms of men will arise.

After line 161 the text is interrupted by a formula that introduces a new section. It is evident from the break-off formula that line 162 starts a new section. Similar introduction formulas occur three other times within the book (162-166, 196-198, 295-299, 489-491), albeit with slight deviations, and serve as an important structuring element. These formulas may have been influenced by similar formulas used by biblical prophets to mark the end of one revelation and the beginning of another (*Wortereignisformel*).<sup>4</sup> One can assume that there was another introduction like the one we have here in the now lost beginning of the book.

<sup>3</sup> The form ἡγερέθονται in line 166 is listed as an epic form of ἀγείρομαι (to gather) in LSJ. Some scholars translate it as a passive aorist form of ἐγείρω which appears to be more sensible. However, the correct aorist passive form would be ἡγέρθησαν. Nonetheless, in light of line 159 the latter seems to be the likelier translation. In line 159 the Sibyl used the form ἐγείρατο to describe the rise of the individual kingdoms. LSJ lists ἐγείρατο as an epic aorist form of ἐγείρω. Both forms are unusual nonetheless. I opt for translating 'how many kingdoms rose' rather than 'gathered' as the latter does not make sense and ἐγείρω was already used in line 159 (cf. also line 767).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 240.

The Sibyl says she is ordered to prophecy (προφητεῦσαι) concerning the entire earth. The term is unusual for classical Greek but it is commonly used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew נביא.<sup>5</sup> The usage of the term is intentional and reflects the Sibyl's authority despite her being a pagan oracle.<sup>6</sup> The Sibyl stresses that she is divinely inspired to make her prophecies; she is ordered to prophecy about the entire earth (κατὰ πᾶσαν γαῖαν) and to give to kings what will be (καὶ βασιλεῦσι τὰ τ' ἐσσόμεν' ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖναι). It is noteworthy that the world at large, that is of course the world as the author knew it, is envisaged here rather than the land of Israel or any other particular space. While the biblical prophets are usually ordered to prophesy about or against a specific person, nation, or kingdom, (usually Israel/Judah)<sup>7</sup> the Sibyl is ordered to prophecy about the entire earth. The Sibyl has a universal message. At the same time, the people of the Great God are allotted a special role within the world that the Sibyl is prophesying about. I will be revealed just what that role will be.

The Sibyl addresses the earth and kings of the earth. For now, the Sibyl is focussed on the history of the world as she knows it and allocates the people in it their respective parts. Later on in the book more will be revealed about her ethical message, her addressees and her intended readers.

The section is framed by the formulae in lines 162-166 and 196-198 respectively. Rather than introducing a new section, lines 196-198 conclude section II. This can be seen by viewing the formulae in a synoptic table.

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Num 11:25-27; Ezek 4:7; 6:2; Amos 7:12-16 et al.

<sup>6</sup> Her usage of scripture is most apparent in her depiction of the utopian manifestation of God's dominion on earth (785-92) where she borrowed a decisive amount of motifs from Isa 11.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Isa 1:1; Jer 1:1-19; Ezek 2:3; Hos 1:1-2; Mic 1:1; Amos 1:1; Nah 1:1 (against Niniveh).

	295 ἡνίκα δὴ μοι θυμὸς ἐπαύσατο ἔνθεον ὕμνον 296 καὶ λιτόμην γενετῆρα μέγαν παύσασθαι ἀνάγκης,	489 ἡνίκα δὴ μοι θυμὸς ἐπαύσατο ἔνθεον ὕμνον,	
162 καὶ τότε μοι μέγαλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσι	297 καὶ πάλι μοι μέγαλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσι	490 καὶ πάλι μοι μέγαλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσι	698 αὐτός μοι τάδε πάντα θεὸς μέγας ἀέναός τε
163 ἴστατο καὶ μ' ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ πᾶσαν	298 ἴστατο καὶ μ' ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ πᾶσαν	491 ἴστατο καὶ μ' ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ	699 εἶπε <u>προφητεῦσαι</u>
164 γαῖαν καὶ βασιλεῦσι τὰ τ' ἔσσόμεν' ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖναι.	299 γαῖαν καὶ βασιλεῦσι τὰ τ' ἔσσόμεν' ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖναι.	γαῖαν.	
165 καὶ μοι τοῦτο θεὸς πρῶτον νόῳ ἐγγυάλιξεν, 166 ὅσσοι ἀνθρώπων βασιληίδες ἡγερέθονται .... 196 ἀλλὰ τί μοι καὶ τοῦτο θεὸς νόῳ ἔνθετο λέξαι, 197 τί πρῶτον, τί δ' ἔπειτα, τί δ' ὑστάτιον κακὸν ἔσται 198 πάντας ὑπ' ἀνθρώπους, τίς δ' ἀρχὴ τούτων ἔσται;			τάδε δ' ἔσσεται οὐκ ἀτέλεστα· 700 οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον, ὃ τι κεν μόνον ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖη· 701 ἄψευστον γὰρ πνεῦμα θεοῦ πέλεται κατὰ κόσμον.

The table shows that the formula in lines 162-164 is significantly shorter than in lines 295-299 and 489-491. The introduction formula in lines 162-164 and the formula in lines 196-198 put a frame around the section. Lines 196-198 are not a new introduction formula but rather a conclusive formula.

In lines 166-195 the author then presents a prophecy of the sequence of empires and kingdoms, culminating in the institution of the people of the Great God as guides in life for all mortals.<sup>8</sup> The Roman rule will continue until the seventh kingdom over which an Egyptian king of Greek decent will rule (192). At that time, the people of the great God will be strong again and will be moral guides for all of mankind (195). An anti-Roman bias can be observed here as well as an enmity and a juxtaposition of the east on the one hand - that is the author's point of view - and the west - that is the Macedonians/Greeks and Rome on the other. The section can be seen as an elaboration of the list of kingdoms in line 158-161 as some of the kingdoms recur and are explained in more detail.

<sup>8</sup> This with all probability a reference to the Jewish people. The Sibyl never gives us a clearer definition of who the people of the Great God or the pious are. However, from her account of history of the pious people, in which she speaks of the receiving of the law and the Babylonian, it is clear that she is referring to the to-be Israelites. I refrain from using the term Jews since it raises a wide range of complex problems especially since the Sibyl does not use the term. Towards the end of the book, however, the notion is expressed that the pious Gentiles will be part of God's future dominion as well. Furthermore, the people can, collectively or individually, fall from grace with God so that they are not per se exempt from punishment.

The observation that the account of the different rules can be regarded as an elaboration of the list of empires in lines 158-161 has led some scholars to assume that the section constitutes a later addition to the text.<sup>9</sup> However, there is no sufficient reason to exclude the text. The Sibyl omits some of the aforementioned kingdoms and replaces them with others. A list of nations from Asia Minor is especially noteworthy in this respect. It is therefore a mistake to discard this section as a longer version of 158-161. Rather than that the Sibyl shifts her focus on the role of the people of the Great God (ἔθνος μέγαλοιο θεοῦ) in world history with the kingdom of Solomon as the ideal kingdom and the future role of the people as moral guides for all mankind. The Greeks and Romans serve as the counterpoint to the ideal people of the great God. This juxtaposition is strengthened time and again throughout the book. Through the course of the book it will become clear that the special relation of the people of God to God is defined by the law. This will be explained in section III.

The introduction formula in line 162-166 highlights the Sibyl's occupation with dominion. The Sibyl is to prophesy over the entire earth (κατὰ πᾶσαν γαῖαν) and to kings (καὶ βασιλεῦσι)<sup>10</sup> - which should probably be understood as 'and to the respective kings', i.e. those of kingdom currently in power. We have already seen that the Sibyl exhibits a universal outlook in Section I. Here it is even more explicit. The Sibyl's alleged addressees are the nations of the earth and their rulers. The sequence of empires is laid out in lines 167-191.

#### **Excursus: Ex eventu prophecy and the point of view of the Sibyl**

From the viewpoint of the compilers of the Third Sibyl, who probably compiled the third book between first century BCE and the first century CE, the Sibyl's prophecies are ex eventu. The 'author'<sup>11</sup> places her in the past to legitimise her oracles, a feature that is well known from biblical prophets and is also a common stylistic device in Greek drama.<sup>12</sup> In line 571 the Sibyl announces that none of God's prophecies will remain unfulfilled. In line 829 the book concludes with the remark that all of the Sibyl's prophecies will come true. The fulfilment of prophecy is after all what separates a true prophet from a false one.<sup>13</sup> The Sibyl thus ends her account of universal history and switches to prophecy and prediction. After having narrated the early history of men, the Sibyl now switches to the future tense to prophecy what will be (τ' ἐσσόμεν'). Everything from heron in will be narrated in the future tense.

The introduction formula introduces the new section. Here, the decisive switch to the future tense is made. In her accounts of the Tower of Babel and the Titanomachy, the Sibyl has used the Aorist and Imperfect tense.<sup>14</sup> According to the Sibyl, she is a relative of Noah (line 827). Hence, she must have lived some time after the flood. At the end of the book she states herself that she has heard about the prehistoric events from

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Kurfes, 1951, 81 followed by Gauger, 1998, 77 leaves out 166-212 thus reducing the list of kingdoms to the kingdom of Solomon and the embellishment of the people of God. However, there is no sufficient reason to do so.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. lines 298, and 491.

<sup>11</sup> Evidently, the third book had more than one author wherefore the term is but a circumscription.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Collins, 1987, 425. Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.1-9.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Deut 18:22.

<sup>14</sup> I am aware that the Aorist is not a tempus but a mode. However, due to the usage of the imperfect in the previous section and the future tense from heron in, it is evident that a temporal valence was intended.

her ancestors (819-820). However, the events after the Titanomachy are prophesies put in her mouth by God as is evident from the introduction formula.

A certain inconsistency can be observed with regard to the list of kingdoms in lines 158-161. Whereas in the previous lines the Sibyl was referring to the empires up until the Roman rule in the Aorist, she is now speaking from the point of view of a time even before the reign of Solomon, which is narrated in the future tense. This is of course explained by the fact that – in the imagination of the text – the Sibyl is a relative of Noah and lived some time shortly after the deluge and prophesied at that time. The apparent inconsistencies could easily be explained away by excluding portions of the text as secondary. However, one must bear in mind that ancient authors had a different perception of continuity than the modern reader and that the changes may be intentional. Already in the Hebrew Bible and later in Rabbinic literature it was common sense that the prophets were perfectly able to announce things that were, from their viewpoint, decades or even more than a hundred years in the future.<sup>15</sup> In the case of the Sibyl these inconsistencies within the narrated timeframe to a certain extent arise from the fact that the book is a collection of prophecies that were compiled between the first centuries BCE and CE. The critical reader has to keep in mind both the viewpoint of the Sibyl and the viewpoint of the authors. From the point of view of the Sibyl, everything she announces lies in the future. From the point of view of the authors, however, the prophecies must be regarded as *ex eventu*.

This literary device (the *ex eventu* prophecy) is often used in biblical and Second Temple period writings in order to demonstrate that the events that came to pass in the time of the respective intended readers, or hearers for that matter, has already been announced by the prophets of God, who were directly inspired by him. This method has a twofold function: 1) To relate world history to God and thus to demonstrate that the fate of the Jews (and later Christians) had been God's will and that he eventually will turn their fortune; 2) To make prophetic announcements after the MT canon was closed and it had been decided by the rabbis that there would be no more prophets after Ezra and Nehemiah.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, prophecy declined in the post-exilic period. The later dogma of the end of prophecy is echoed in Josephus' *Against Apion* as follows: 'From Ataxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records, because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets.'<sup>17</sup>

However, in the case of the Sibyl her identity as a pagan (!) prophetess adds a further aspect: Putting prophecies about the Jewish God in the mouth of an ancient respected prophetess adds further authority to the book in a pagan environment. As a pagan character in the Jewish Diaspora the Sibyl has to be seen within her own right. She is the only non-Jewish prophet in Jewish pseudepigraphy. The fact that she was nonetheless adapted by Jewish writers sheds light not only on her prominence but also on the Jewish self-image in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora.

### 3.4 How many kingdoms of men will arise: The house of Solomon (167-170)

167 οἶκος μὲν γὰρ πρώτιστος Σολομώνιος ἄρξει

<sup>15</sup> The most prominent example being the book of Isaiah, the prophet 'who makes his appearance on the political scene in an attempt to persuade Ahaz of Judah to remain calm-faced with the Syrian-Israelite axis opposing the forward advance of the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser III (747-727)' (Blenkinsopp, 2000, 91). Cf. Isa 6:1-13; 8:1-22. The MT attributes the anonymous prophecies about Cyrus and the eventual return of the Israelites from the Babylonian Exile some 200 years later to the same prophet, Isaiah, whom critical scholarship distinguishes as second Isaiah. Josephus was already aware of the problem with regard to Isaiah so that in his version of the events in the Jewish Antiquities he has Cyrus - through divine inspiration - read the prophecies that Isaiah allegedly made 140 years before the First Temple had been destroyed causing him to write his famous decree (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.1-6).

<sup>16</sup> That of course was not relevant until well after 200 CE. Malachi is acknowledged to have been the last prophet of Israel if one accepts the rabbinic opinion that Nehemiah died in Babylon before ninth Tevet 3448 (313 BCE) Cf. b. Sanh. 11a, b. Yoma 9a.

<sup>17</sup> C. Ap. 1.41 (Thackeray, LCL). It should be noted though that Josephus does occasionally refer to prophets nonetheless cf. *Ant.* 13.299.

168 Φοίνικες τ', Ἀσίας ἐπιβήτορες<sup>18</sup> ἡδὲ καὶ ἄλλων  
 169 νήσων, Παμφύλων τε γένος Περσῶν τε Φρυγῶν τε,  
 170 Καρῶν καὶ Μυσῶν Λυδῶν τε γένος πολυχρύσων.

The house of Solomon will reign first  
 and the Phoenicians, who set foot on Asia and other  
 islands, on the Pamphylians, the race of Persians, Phrygians,  
 Carians, Mysians, and the Lydians rich in gold.

After the introduction formula (162-166) a sequence of empires follows. Besides the formula, the introduction of the future tense in line 167 also shows that this is the beginning of a new section.

The empires will reign in turn until eventually God will establish his eternal dominion for all men (line 767). That is when the horizontal and the vertical line meet. For now, however, the Sibyl moves along the horizontal line. The section at hand reveals much about the horizontal line in terms of chronology but also in terms of geography. The mention of places and regions in Asia Minor alongside the empires of the Persians and Macedonians establishes a setting for the motif of the wandering Sibyl, who was believed to be local to Asia Minor.<sup>19</sup>

Whereas in the previous lines the Sibyl gave us a mere list of kingdoms reigning after one another, she now gives us an extant account of several kingdoms and what happened to them. Most importantly, however, the account of the kingdoms is subjective. It seems to be important for the Sibyl to unfold the vices of the kingdoms in order to put them over against the people of God and their superior law and moral behaviour (cf. lines 218-264) so that they can be guides in live for all men (lines 194-195).

The section has a recurring pattern. The form ἄρξει structures the different rules outlined: first the house of Solomon, then the Macedonians (172), and then the Romans (177). It is said that the house of Solomon will reign first (167), followed by or alongside with<sup>20</sup> the Phoenicians (168), the Pamphylians, the Persians, and the Phrygians (169), the Carians<sup>21</sup>, the Mysians, and the Lydians (170). Whereas in the previous list the empires were listed marking the historical sequence from the Titan reign to the coming of Rome, the focus in this section shifts towards Asia (Minor) and eventually the people of the Great God. The Sibyl's

<sup>18</sup> Buitenwerf (2003, 180f) reads ἐπιβήτορας following the manuscript readings (ΦΨ). This has already been proposed by Wilamowitz and Geffcken, although Geffcken notes that Solomon could not have been considered ruler of all of Asia (Geffcken, 1902a, 57).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. lines 809-829 and comments there.

<sup>20</sup> Buitenwerf (2003, 181) argues again that the kingdoms listed are not necessarily successive since lines 168ff lack a clear denominator as τότε.

<sup>21</sup> In lines 207-209 an evil fate is predicted for the Carians and the Pamphylians which they will suffer at the hands of the Greeks.

‘history here has a Mediterranean rather than a Mesopotamien outlook.’<sup>22</sup> The focus on Asia Minor is with all likelihood owed to the Sibyl’s association with the area.<sup>23</sup>

The passage poses some difficulties. First of all, it is curious that the Phoenicians are said to have ruled alongside the house of Solomon. Secondly, the genitives in lines 168ff need further consideration. The genitives all depend on the word ἐπιβήτορες in line 168a. The noun is derived from the verb ἐπιβαίνω. In combination with a genitive ἐπιβαίνω means ‘to mount’ or ‘to set foot on’.<sup>24</sup> Hence, lines 168ff should be translated as follows: ‘and the Phoenicians, who set foot on Asia and other islands, on the Pamphylians, the race of Persians, Phrygians, Carians, Mysians, and the Lydians rich in gold’.<sup>25</sup>

By listing the kingdom of Solomon first, the Sibyl allots the Jewish people a place in universal history. It seems a little odd though that the author would chose the kingdom of Solomon over that of David, who is the role-model king in contemporary Jewish literature. However, the reason may be that Solomon was the more prominent figure in Hellenistic Judaism since he was commonly associated with wisdom. The Wisdom of Solomon and the Psalms of Solomon attest for the ongoing of Solomon in Hellenistic Judaism. Otherwise the choice of a Jewish kingdom as the first of a sequence of empires is self-evident. The author thinks of the Solomonic kingdom as an ideal one because the people of the Great God shall be moral guides of all people (cf. 194-195). The kingdom of Solomon is an entity of the past that by the time of the Sibyl had become an idealised memory of a glorious era.<sup>26</sup> However, it is also the place where the law of God was kept.<sup>27</sup> Another reason for the choice of Solomon over David maybe that Solomon was the one to build the temple which is of particular

<sup>22</sup> Bartlett, 1984, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. lines 809-829 and comments there.

<sup>24</sup> LSJ “ἐπιβαίνω,” 623-624.

<sup>25</sup> It is not implied here that the house of Solomon and the Phoenicians ruled over the nations mentioned as taht would require a dative or accusative cf. LSJ “ἐπιβαίνω,” 623-624.

<sup>26</sup> According to the Hebrew Bible, Solomon reigned over Israel for 40 years (1 Kgs 11:42, cf. 1 Kgs 2:11). This is an ideal resulting from his esteem as builder of the first temple (1 Kgs 3:6-8) and his proverbial wisdom (cf. Sir 47:12-18). Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes). Solomon’s reign is associated with the peak of the independet kingdom of Israel. He introduced a centralized administration and tax system (1 Kgs 4:1-19, cf. 5:27-32) and worked on the temple and the palace in Jerusalem (1 Kg 5:15-8,13). After his reign, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah were divided (1 Kgs 12).

The Wisdom of Solomon as well as the Psalms of Solomon are attributed to him (although Ψαλμοί Σολομῶντος could also be read as a dedication). The latter two have only come down to us in Greek and roughly date to the first century BCE to the first century CE (see Atkinson, 2004, 84f for further reading). The New Testament speaks of his glory (Mt 6:29) and wisdom (Mt 12:42; Lk 11:31) while the Odes (first to second century CE) and Testament of Solomon attest for his continued popularity down to the Christian era.

<sup>27</sup> On the law cf. 252-294.



importance for the Sibyl.<sup>28</sup> According to Sirach, Solomon reigned in a peaceful age which God provided so he would build him a perpetual temple.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Sibyl speaks of the kingdom of Solomon rather than the kingdom of Israel which is not mentioned in the entire book. Neither Israel nor the term Jews or Judea occur. It is most curious that the Sibyl does not mention where the kingdom of Solomon was. For all we know the house of Solomon reigned somewhere and the intended reader would know where. The other nations can be located by their names. In the case of the Phoenicians it is even more evident because they are designated as having set foot on Asia and the islands. Where the house of Solomon reigned is up to the reader's imagination but with regard to the persons in the know it certainly invokes traditions of a glorious past. It is curious nonetheless that the Sibyl omits the location of the Solomonic kingdom while she allots each of the other kingdoms their place on the world map.

The Sibyl mentions the kingdom of Solomon alongside the Phoenician kingdom and the Persian Empire.<sup>30</sup> The Persian Empire was already mentioned in lines 158b-161 above. The other places mentioned are regions and/or nations in Asia Minor. At first glance the kingdoms display no clear connection to one another. However, from a geographical perspective the focus on the east and Asia Minor in particular, is curious. The focus on Asia Minor matches the alleged origin of the Sibyl in Erythraea found in line 814.

The transition from the house of Solomon and the Phoenicians to the Asian peninsula is made by the relative clause saying that the Phoenicians set foot on Asia and on other islands (ἐπιβήτορες ἡδὲ καὶ ἄλλων νήσων). The Phoenicians were merchants that had trade routes that extended as far as Asia Minor. Their contact with Solomon is documented several times in 1 Kgs 3-12. A vivid range of their trading-contracts is given in Ezek 27. Bartlett suggests that trade, rather than military invasion is meant by 'who set foot on Asia'.<sup>31</sup> From a Greek perspective the islands on which the Phoenicians set foot also would refer to those in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Asia Minor. This is probably what is implied here since it matches the area of the nations mentioned. Later in the book the burning of the Phoenician

---

<sup>28</sup> It is noteworthy that the only figures from the Hebrew Bible that are mentioned by name are Solomon and Moses. One built the temple and the other is associated with the law (cf. lines 252ff).

<sup>29</sup> Sir 47:13ff. While in verses 13-18 Solomon is praised for his wisdom, proverbs and wealth he is also criticised for submitting himself to women and adultery in verses 19-20. In verse 20-23 Sira describes how as a result the kingdom broke apart and Solomon left behind a line of foolish and sinful kings (Roboam and Jeroboam).

<sup>30</sup> Buitenwerf (2003, 181) proposed that it is also possible to translate that the house of Solomon will rule over the others, which would be grammatically unusual but not impossible (see also Merkel, 2003, 1087). It is noteworthy that the Phoenicians are given in the nominative (Φοίνικες) whence the implication that Solomon ruled over them is unlikely. However, the following nations are all in the genitive depending on the nominative γένος.

<sup>31</sup> Bartlett, 1984, 45.

cities is prophesied.<sup>32</sup> The Persian Empire was already mentioned in the list of kingdoms in lines 158-161. The Persians were in control of most of this area during the fourth and the fifth century BCE which is probably why they are mentioned alongside the Asian peoples. The Persian Empire is known to have extended into the Asian peninsula. Pontus had been a Persian satrapy until 301 BCE and the Mithridatic dynasty of Pontus was of Persian origin.<sup>33</sup> Their empire began with Cyrus the Great who overthrew Babylon in 539 BCE and ended with Alexander's defeat of Darius III in 331 BCE respectively. 'From a Mediterranean viewpoint the Persians could certainly be seen as a successor to the Phoenicians, whose naval resources they used to maintain Persian presence in the Aegean.'<sup>34</sup>

The author then turns to the western half of what is now Turkey (Phrygians, Carians, Mysians, Lydians). The Asian nations mentioned all became significant in the Hellenistic world until they were incorporated one by one into the Roman Empire. Some had already been subject to the Persian Empire in the fifth century BCE. The Persians controlled an enormous empire reaching from the borders of India in the east to the Mediterranean seaboard on the west, divided into administrative regions called satrapies.<sup>35</sup> A few historical facts shall be mentioned in brief<sup>36</sup>:

1) The Phrygians (169) occupied west-central Turkey. They were eventually subjected to Rome. Pamphylia became part of the Seleucid Empire, however, Antiochus III was forced to hand it over to Rome in 189 BCE.

Though the Phoenicians never ruled the area, their extensive trade-routes may be considered remarkable from a Mediterranean point of view so that the Persians could be regarded as their successors. The extension of the Persian Empire (169) down to Asia Minor was the actual novelty in ancient historiography. Curiously enough, the author does not mention the Assyrians/Babylonians in this passage. Chances are he wanted to stress the Mediterranean outlook. The author of *Sib. Or.* 3 may have tried to include this extended list (as the Assyrians were mentioned earlier) to give a clearer picture of the situation in the area to which the Sibyl was local. In line 814 the Sibyl identifies herself as the Erythraean one, Erythrea being on the west coast of Asia Minor.<sup>37</sup>

2) The Carians and the Mysians (170) were independent states in Asia Minor under the Attalid dynasty in the third century BCE. However, the Carians were subjected to a Persian

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. lines 492ff.

<sup>33</sup> The name derives from the Persian deity Mithras. Cf. Justinius, *Ep. hist. Phil.* 38.7.1.

<sup>34</sup> Bartlett, 1984, 45.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Bartlett, 1984, 45f.

<sup>36</sup> For further reading see Magie, 1950.

<sup>37</sup> See comments there.

satrapy. Mysia was incorporated into the Roman Empire in 133 BCE, 'opening the way to total Roman control of Asia Minor'<sup>38</sup>. The Phrygians were in turn subject to the Lydians, the Persians, the Seleucids and finally, the Romans.

3) The Lydians (170) are said to be rich in gold. It is a well known fact that Croesus, the last king of Lydia, was said to be exceedingly wealthy.<sup>39</sup> Lydia's proverbial wealth was common knowledge in antiquity. In line 179 it is said that the Romans will destroy much gold from many cities. Croesus's kingdom fell to Cyrus in 546 BCE and became part of the Persian Empire. However, Lydia and Asia Minor as a whole for that matter, was conquered by Alexander in 331 BCE and incorporated into the Roman Empire in 133 BCE. Lydia eventually passed to Rome along with most of Asia Minor.<sup>40</sup>

Similar lists to this one recur in lines 205-9 and 514-17.<sup>41</sup> In lines 205-210a evil will come upon several peoples (Troy, Phrygians<sup>42</sup>, Persians, Egyptians, Libyans, Ethiopians, Carians and Pamphylians) and finally upon all mortals. The Asian nations mentioned were largely independent until the advent of the Romans. The inclusion of Ethiopia and Libya (=Africa)<sup>43</sup> in the list shows once more the universal character of God's judgment.

In all three lists, the number of Asian peoples is noteworthy.<sup>44</sup> Rather than proceeding chronologically the author seems to adhere to a geographical progression from east to west.<sup>45</sup> He moves from the house of Solomon to Phoenicia, via the Island, to Asia Minor, Greece and at last Rome (175ff). The regions of Asia Minor mentioned in this section flourished particularly in the Hellenistic period. They are frequently mentioned throughout the book (205ff, 343ff, 401ff, 411ff, 433ff, 470ff, 484ff and 512ff)<sup>46</sup>. However, it is noteworthy that the order of the Asian peoples is by no means geographically exact. Furthermore, the list is not extent. Regions and provinces are missing from the list, e.g. Lycia, Cilicia and Asia. The ones mentioned, i.e. Pamphylia, Phrygia, Caria, Mysia, and Lydia all lay on the western coast of Asia Minor (although Phrygia is an inland region). The author moves via Phoenicia and the

---

<sup>38</sup> Bartlett, 1985, 46.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Herodotus, Hist. 1.6-94.

<sup>40</sup> For further reading see Magie, 1950.

<sup>41</sup> See comments there.

<sup>42</sup> Apparently, the Sibyl equates Troy with Ilium, which was a city in Phrygia (cf. Lines 419-432). The destruction of the Phrygians in line 205 probably needs to be seen in light of the Trojan War. The Sibyl locates the ancient city of Troy in Ilium in Phrygia (see lines 401-432). The legendary Trojan War, as portrayed by Homer in the *Ilias*, is perceived by the Sibyl not as an epic tale of heroes and Gods but as an example for the cruelty and wickedness of war, which the Sibyl portrays as the source of all evil (cf. line 156).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Herodotus, Hist. 4.42.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 182.

<sup>45</sup> Bartlett, 1984, 46.

<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that most of these instances occur in passages that imitate the Erythrean Sibyl. See comments on lines 350ff.

islands to central and western Anatolia before going on to Greece/Macedonia and Rome.<sup>47</sup> The progression from east to west mirrors the Sibyl's travels as she describes them in line 809-816.

The account of the Greeks and Romans in the following passage may shed light on why the Sibyl chose the Asian nations. Both Hellenistic and the Roman empires conquered the east coming from the west. Concordantly, they arrived first on the shores of western Asia Minor. The Sibyl's interest seems to be the global impact of the Macedonian conquest covering the inhabited world until its boundaries in the east (Persia) and in the south (Ethiopia). Within this broader scheme the Asian nations will suffer first from the Greeks and Romans as they are the first to be afflicted by their expansion. The Sibyl's apparent focus on the nations of Asia Minor may be owed to the fact that they naturally were the first nations of the east to be conquered from the west by the Greeks and later by the Romans due to their geographical position. Anyone who wanted to invade the east had to cross Asia Minor to get there.

### **3.5 The map of the Sibyl and the Table of Nations tradition**

Chances are the kingdoms are not only chosen according to a common geographical knowledge but also on the basis of the Table of Nations tradition from Gen 10 as proposed by Scott for the list of empires in line 158-161.<sup>48</sup> According to Josephus, the sons of Japheth inhabited Asia up until the Tanais (Don) and Europe up until Gadeira (Cadiz). Tanais is the ancient Greek name for the river Don and was regarded as the boundary between Europe and Asia. Gadeira, on the other hand, was considered the westernmost corner of the earth.<sup>49</sup> By the second century BCE the east had been opened up and made safe to travel first through the conquest of Alexander and then through the Roman expansion.<sup>50</sup> Geographical knowledge was after all gained by way of travel.

Does the Sibyl have the tripartite division of the earth in mind? The Sibyl's kingdoms indeed occur in Josephus' version of the Table of Nation and in Jubilees 8-9.<sup>51</sup> The Sibyl also attests for three continents, namely Europe, Asia and Libya (Africa), according to the three sons of Cronus/Noah. Her political focus, however, is on the division between Asia and Europe, East and West respectively. It is particularly evident from the second half of the

---

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Bartlett, 1985, 46f.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Scott, 1995, 38ff. Cf. also comments on section I.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Polybius, Hist. 3.37.2.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Polybius, Hist. 3.59.3.

<sup>51</sup> Josephus, Ant. 1. 124 (Japheth = Medes, cf. Gen. Rab. 37.1), 127 (Phrygians, Cilicians); 128 (Cyprus); 131 (Ham = Ethiopians); 132 (Egyptians, Libya); 136 (Babylonians); 143 (Shem = Persians, Assyrians = Chaldeans, Lydians).

account of empires that an opposition is created between the east and the west, i.e. the kingdom of Solomon and a line of Asian kingdoms over against the Greeks and Romans. The focus on Asia Minor is then again a peculiarity of the Third Sibyl and is most likely owed to her self-proclaimed Erythraean provenience.<sup>52</sup>

Even though the references to the traditional tripartite division of the earth as perceived by Josephus or Jubilees are scarce, the horizontal succession of empires has to be seen as a result of the division of rule among the Titans and the beginning of war and divided kingdoms as a result of their hubris.<sup>53</sup>

The Sibyl may have had the local Jewish Diaspora in mind. Lydia, Asia and Phrygia contained the important Jewish centres of Asia Minor such as Apamea, Ephesus, Sardis and Smyrna. It is exactly that part of Asia Minor that Paul was unable to penetrate at his first missionary attempt. According to Breytenbach, Paul was not able to enter western Asia Minor from the east due to the strong Jewish resistance along the Via Sebaste.<sup>54</sup> Christianity eventually spread to the later province of Asia from the west, i.e. from the Ionian Coast. Was the author from the region and did he chose the Erythraean Sibyl because of his affiliation to the region or is the Sibyl's map an imagined one? The Sibyl's map is certainly based on geographical knowledge on the one hand, i.e. what was generally known about geography in the Graeco-Roman period, and the Table of Nations, that was updated according to Graeco-Roman geography by Josephus and Jubilees, on the other. These markers serve as a matrix for the Sibyl's world to be sketched on. This is where the real and imagined begin to intertwine.

### 3.6 The assessment of the Empires

The history of empires can be divided into three periods. The first period lists several eastern kingdoms beginning with the reign of Solomon. These kingdoms are succeeded by the Macedonian Empire (171-74), then by the Roman Empire (175-93). The first period does not seem to consist of warfare and calamities. The kingdom of Solomon is imagined as the ideal kingdom as will become evident in the Sibyl's eulogy of the pious men in lines 213-247. The Phoenicians, Persians as well as the Asian nations appear unbiased. On the contrary, the Macedonians and Romans are strongly biased. They signify a period of war and calamities. Over against that period stands that of the future role of the people of God as guides in life for

---

<sup>52</sup> Cf. line 816.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. lines 153-55 and comments there.

<sup>54</sup> Breytenbach, 2004, 164.

all men. The latter denotes a future period when God will establish his divine dominion on earth.

If one understands this section as an elaboration of the list of empires in lines 158-161 it is curious that the author leaves out Babylon/Assyria here. However, it catches the eye that the kingdoms in lines 168-170 are denoted in an unbiased way and to a certain extent alongside with Solomon's reign. They receive no moral judgement. The Assyrians and Babylonians would evidently not fit that context. The positive connotation of Phoenicia and Persia is in line with biblical history in so far as the builders of Solomon's temple came from Tyre (Phoenicia) and the Persian emperor Cyrus let the Jews return from exile.<sup>55</sup> The Phoenician's contact with Solomon is documented several times in 1 Kgs 3-12. An account of their extensive trade-routes is given in Ezek 27 and chances are that this trade is alluded to in line 168 ('the Phoenicians, who set foot on Asia etc.'). Since the Sibyl is here speaking of the time of Solomon it is plausible that the Phoenicians do not get a negative assessment. Later in the book, however, they too will be judged by God.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, we find no more mention of the land of Israel. The kingdom of Solomon is but a memory of a distant past. Although the Sibyl focuses on the conquest of the east, there is no sign of the annexation of Judea in 63 BCE let alone the destruction of the temple in 70 CE.

The Sibyl is exhibiting an image of a temporarily peacefully divided earth from the reign of the house of Solomon up until the advent of the Macedon Empire. There is no mention of war or strife up until the advance of the Greeks and the Romans. However, war was first brought about by the Titans (lines 154-155) of whom the Sibyl considers the Greeks descendants (403). Over against the peaceful period eastern Mediterranean kingdoms and the Persian Empire stand those of the Diadochi and Rome which are represented in a strongly biased way.

Here the Sibyl departs from the horizontal description of succession of empires. From now on the kingdoms of the earth are no longer seen as legitimate but as arrogant, impious adversaries of God. The end of the Macedonian reign (and later of the Romans and all other nations who transgress the law)<sup>57</sup> will be brought about on the vertical line, namely through divine intervention.

---

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Ezra 1:1-4.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. lines 492, 597.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. comments on line 599.

### 3.7 The Macedonian Empire (171-174)

171 αὐτὰρ ἔπειθ' Ἑλλήνες ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄναγνοι·  
 172 ἄλλο Μακεδονίης ἔθνος μέγα ποικίλον ἄρξει,  
 173 οἷ φοβερὸν πολέμοιο νέφος ἥξουσιν βροτοῖσιν.  
 174 ἀλλὰ μιν οὐράνιος θεὸς ἐκ βυθοῦ ἐξαλαπάξει.

After that the arrogant and impious Greeks,  
 another Macedonian race, great and manifold, will reign,  
 they will come as a terrible cloud of war upon mortals.  
 But the heavenly God will destroy them utterly from the depth.

The conjunction αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα + future tense introduces a new period. The form ἄρξει, which was used in line 167 to introduce the reign of Solomon, is repeated here and structures the section.

The transition from Greeks to Macedonians in lines 171-172 is noteworthy. We have already seen in lines 158-161 that the Sibyl does not clearly distinguish between Greeks and Macedonians (or Assyrians and Babylonians for that matter). The Macedonians thought of themselves as Greek, but the Greeks thought of them as Macedonian.<sup>58</sup> The Sibyl does not think of Macedon or Greek as separate entities but of the Hellenistic kingdoms, i.e. that of Alexander and his successors. Both were by the time of writing of the Sibyl entities of the past. In addition, in Jewish texts the word Ἑλλην does not only designate the ethnos, it approximated the meaning of 'Hellenist' as well.<sup>59</sup> In line 609-10 it is furthermore implied that the Macedonians will found the Greek dominion. In the list of kingdoms in lines 158b-161 the Macedonians follow the Persian rule and precede the Roman rule. In both instances, their position is analogous to that of the Greeks in line 171. Likewise, the Sibyl does not distinguish sharply between the Babylonians and the Assyrians. This may be explained by the fact that the Sibyl drew from older oracles that used either term or that the difference was no longer familiar in the Hellenistic period.<sup>60</sup> As in the case of Babylon/Assyria the distinction may no longer have been familiar to the author. The Graeco-Macedonians as well as the Assyrians/Babylonians are entities of the past whereas Rome is the current dominion in which she has more interest. This kind of equation is not unparalleled in antiquity. Graeco-Roman historians did not sharply distinguish between Assyria/Babylon and Macedon/Greece either when it came to the succession of rule.<sup>61</sup> This notion has a history; the nominal identification of different nations in Jewish history. In the Qumran Texts, for instance, Macedonians and

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Herodotus, Hist. 5.22; Isocrates, Or. 5.107.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. 2 Macc 4:10 where the High Priest is accused of having adopted Ἑλληνικὸν χαρακτῆρα (Hellenistic character).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Herodotus, Hist. 1.92, 160, 178.2, 193.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Polybius, Hist. 1.3.

Romans are both referred to as Kittim which originally described the inhabitants of Cyprus.<sup>62</sup> For instance, in the War Rule from Qumran (1QM) the first two columns detail the sequence of events during the 40 year war of the Sons of Light against all the nations of the world, led by the Kittim, that is, the Hellenistic kingdoms in early Qumran compositions and later the Seleucids in particular and finally the Romans.<sup>63</sup>

The Persian Empire will be succeeded by the Graeco-Macedonians as we have already observed in the list of kingdoms in line 158-161. Whereas the account of the kingdoms of Solomon, the Phoenicians, the Persians and those of Asia received no moral connotation, the Sibyl describes the Greeks as arrogant and impious (ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄναγνοι). The description is a stock one, used elsewhere in the book.<sup>64</sup> Over against this the Sibyl has the pious people as a role model in mind, who is neither of these things, as will become evident in her eulogy in lines 218ff.

ὑπερφίαλος is a Homeric term. In the Iliad it is often used of the Trojans<sup>65</sup> and in the Odyssey it frequently describes the unruly suitors of Odysseus' wife Penelope<sup>66</sup>. Both the Trojans and the suitors were killed at the end of the story because of their arrogance. The term describes a state of mind, an arrogant and offensive behaviour. In line 552ff, however, it explicitly refers to Greek religious (mis)behaviour, such as polytheism and the worship of dead kings. ἄναγνος, on the other hand, literally means 'unholy' or 'unclean' and is a term belonging to the sacred sphere. In Judaism, holiness and cleanliness are two sides of the same coin wherefore the term is very fitting to describe pagan religion. In 2 Macc 4:13 the behaviour of Jason the High Priest is described as ἀναγνεία (wickedness) because of his impelling of Hellenism (Ελληνισμός).<sup>67</sup> It is a common concept in Judaism of the Second Temple period that immorality ultimately stems from idolatry which is contemptuous of God. The worship of dead kings and implicitly the Titans, as in line 552, is transgression of the fixed demarcation between human and divine. In line 279 the pious are accused of having honoured idols of mortals instead of God (θνητῶν εἰδῶλα δ' ἐτίμας). The worship of dead idols equals that of dead kings (i.e. the deified Titans) in line 546 in which the Greeks put their trust.

The Sibyl describes the Greeks as hubristic; not only do they bring war upon the people through their arrogance, they are also an offence to God. Only God holds the true claim to world dominion which is fulfilled in his heavenly kingdom towards the end of the book. This is where the divine and the human sphere are joined. The Sibyl relativizes the Greek

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Num 24:24; Isa 23:1, 12; Jer 2:10; Ezek 27:6; Dan 11:30. The traditional identification with Cyprus is questioned by the reference to it as birthplace of Alexander the Great in 1 Macc 1:1-11. Tg. Onq. Num 24:24 identifies it with Rome and apparently so does 1QpHab 2:12.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. 1QM 1.1-7 cf. Dan 12:1. Cf. Eshel, 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Bartlett, 1985, 46. Cf. lines 203, 552.

<sup>65</sup> Homer, Il. 13.621, 21.459.

<sup>66</sup> Homer, Od. 1.134, 2.310.

<sup>67</sup> It should be noted though that the term is not common Greek Jewish literature. There is only this one occurrence in the LXX. Other than that, it has a few more occurrences in the Third, the Fifth, and the Eighth Book of the Sibylline Oracles. The Fifth Book, however, is largely based on the Third and probably derived the term from there. Cf. Sib. Or 3.171, 203, 496-497, 695; 5.224, 299, 399, 408, 439, 479; 8:288, 380. There are a few occurrences in Philo (Cher. 1.94; Sacr. 1.138; Post. 1.177; Abr. 1.14; Spec. 4.217) and two in Josephus (B.J. 5.100; C. Ap. 1.306).



dominion in light of her euhemeristic portrayal of the Titanomachy. As the Greeks are heirs to the Titans, war will persist throughout their reign and 'the Greek kings will continue the immoral quest for world dominion'<sup>68</sup>.

The Sibyl prophesies that the Macedonians will come over the people as a terrible cloud of war, an image that is probably derived from Homer.<sup>69</sup> The people she has in mind are with all likelihood those that she mentioned in the previous lines, i.e. the nations of Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean. War (πόλεμος) is once more essential to this kingdom – just like it was of the Titan kings who started the first war (cf. 154-55).

The Sibyl then rounds off the account of the reign of the Graeco-Macedonians by saying that God will utterly destroy them from the depth - or according to Buitenwerf 'from the sea'.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the Greek ἐκ βυθοῦ usually designates the depth of the sea but it can also take a meaning of 'utterly'. Buitenwerf suggest that the coming of Rome from the western sea in line 175 indicates that the Macedonians will be destroyed by the Romans (hence 'from the sea').<sup>71</sup> The theory is plausible; the notion of foreign kingdoms as instruments of God is a common feature on the Hebrew Bible. The Sibyl's conclusion is similar to that in line 158f where she rounded off the end of the Titans. Again, the notion comes to the fore that a powerful kingdom is brought to an end through God's intervention. Once more human dominion is relativised. As God did to the Titans, he will also bring about the fall of the Macedonian empire in the future because of its hubris. The prediction that God will destroy the Macedonians from the depth corresponds to the notion that he acts from heaven (μὲν οὐράνιος). The depth and God's position in heaven are in marked contrast and demonstrate his universal power. The expressions ἐκ βυθοῦ and μὲν οὐράνιος are in marked contrast. Even though God resides in heaven he is not remote or distant; he is master over his creation and is able to destroy his enemies even from the depth of the sea.

The account of the Macedonian empire in lines 171-174 is comparably brief: It will bring war upon the people and then God will destroy them. In this passage, their destruction serves as punishment for their warfare which is a common theme in the book and in contemporary Jewish texts.<sup>72</sup> The Sibyl's aversion to the proverbial love of war of the Greeks is also evident in her prophecy about Homer.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 196.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 17.243.

<sup>70</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 183. Cf. Exod 15:15; Neh 8:11; Ps 67:23; 68:3, 16.

<sup>71</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 183.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Amos 1:3-2:3 but also Herodotus, Hist. 6.19; Sib. Or. 5.325; Wis 1:10ff, 16; 3:10.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. lines 420ff. The author of the Third Sibyl is not entirely anti-Hellenistic. Rather than that, it is probable that the anti-Macedonian oracles were borrowed from an earlier source. Chances are that some of the predictions in this section are either derived from older anti-Hellenistic oracles or that the Sibyllist is trying to

### 3.8 The kingdom from the western sea (175-191)

After her assessment of the Macedonians, the Sibyl then introduces the beginning of another kingdom (ἄλλη βασιληΐς) that will immediately follow that of the Greeks (175). The kingdom is said to be white and many-headed and coming from the western sea (ἀφ' ἐσπερίοιο θαλάσσης). The reference is to the Romans. An elaboration on these terms is necessary.

175 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἄλλης βασιληΐδος ἔσσεται ἀρχή  
 176 λευκή καὶ πολύκρανος ἀφ' ἐσπερίοιο θαλάσσης,  
 177 ἣ πολλῆς γαίης ἄρξει, πολλοὺς δὲ σαλεύσει,  
 178 καὶ πᾶσιν βασιλεῦσι φόβον μετόπισθε ποιήσει,  
 179 πολλὸν δ' αὖ χρυσὸν τε καὶ ἄργυρον ἐξαλαπάξει  
 180 ἐκ πόλεων πολλῶν· πάλι δ' ἔσσεται ἐν χθονὶ δίῃ  
 181 χρυσίον, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα καὶ ἄργυρος ἡδὲ τε κόσμος.  
 182 καὶ θλίψουσι βροτούς· μέγα δ' ἔσσεται ἀνδράσι κείνοις  
 183 πτόμ', ὅπταν ἄρξωνθ' ὑπερηφανίης ἀδίκου.  
 184 αὐτίκα δ' ἐν τούτοις ἀσεβείας ἔσσετ' ἀνάγκη,  
 185 ἄρσην δ' ἄρσενι πλησιάσει στήσουσί τε παῖδας  
 186 αἰσχροῖς ἐν τεγέεσσι καὶ ἔσσεται ἡμασι κείνοις  
 187 θλίψις ἐν ἀνθρώποις μεγάλη καὶ πάντα ταράξει,  
 188 πάντα δὲ συγκόψει καὶ πάντα κακῶν ἀναπλήσει  
 189 αἰσχροβίῳ φιλοχρημοσύνῃ, κακοκερδέϊ πλούτῳ,  
 190 ἐν πολλαῖς χώρῃσι, Μακεδονίῃ δὲ μάλιστα.  
 191 μῖσος δ' ἐξεγερεῖ καὶ πᾶς δόλος ἔσσεται αὐτοῖς.

But then will be the beginning of another kingdom  
 White and many-headed from the western sea  
 Which will rule much land, it will shake many  
 and it will cause much fear to kings to come,  
 it will destroy much gold and silver,  
 from many cities: but there will be gold again  
 on the wondrous earth, but then also silver and embellishment,  
 and they will oppress the mortals. There will be a great fall for those men,  
 once they begin their unjust arrogance,  
 immediately they will succumb to impiety,  
 male will have sexual intercourse with male,  
 and they will put boys in shameful houses.  
 Great oppression will be upon men in those days and  
 it will cut everything into pieces and fill it up with evils  
 with love of money and ill received wealth  
 in many lands, but Macedonia most of all,  
 it will stir up hatred and all deceit will be theirs.

---

imitate the style of Sibyls local to the area to lend credibility to his oracles. At any rate, the Sibyl's aversion is that against war and imperialism, not against the Hellenistic culture per se. The fact that the book is written in Greek Hexameter and from the point of view of a pagan prophetess shows that the authors were - to a certain extent - educated in Greek culture as well as in Jewish tradition.

Line 175 introduces a new era in the line of kingdoms. This is again evident from the usage of αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα and the future tense. In lines 175-176 it is said that there will be the beginning (or rule) of another kingdom, white and many-headed from the western sea. It is usually agreed that this refers to the first impression of the rise of Rome in the East some time after the battle of Magnesia in 190 BCE<sup>74</sup>, since Rome comes from the west and follows the Macedonian rule. Although the description of a kingdom coming from the west is not surprising<sup>75</sup>, the expression ἀφ' ἑσπερίοιο θαλάσσης deserves attention.

According to LSJ the term ἑσπερίος can either refer to 1) time, i.e. evening, eventide or 2) place (lat. *occidentalis*) in which case it means west or western (according to where the sun sets), or the western parts in line 176.<sup>76</sup> An example for the term ἑσπερίος in its spatial meaning in contemporary literature can be found in line 88 of the letter of Aristeeas in the description of the temple where it is described that the back of the temple faces the west (here the noun ἑσπέρα is used).<sup>77</sup> The question arises what the Sibyl perceives as the western sea. In the MT, the words for sea (that is the Mediterranean) and west (דָּרֹם) eventually became identical. This is little surprising as from a Palestinian perspective the sea, i.e. the Mediterranean is to the west.<sup>78</sup>

The noun Ἑσπερία is also a name for Italy. According to a fragment by Agathyllus, a Hellenistic writer of elegies from Arcadia, Aeneas – the legendary founder of Rome – stopped in Arcadia on his journey from Troy before reaching Ἑσπερία, where he fathered Romulus.<sup>79</sup> Virgil also records that Italy was then known as Hesperia.<sup>80</sup> In both cases the term explicitly refers to Italy.<sup>81</sup> Seen in that light, the reference in line 176 of the Third Sibyl without a doubt refers to the coming of Rome from the western Mediterranean.

The expression ἀφ' ἑσπερίοιο θαλάσσης recurs in book 12 of the Sibylline oracles.

ἔσσειτ' ἄναξ πρότιτος ἀφ' ἑσπερίοιο θαλάσσης (Sib. Or. 12.14).  
The first lord will be from the western sea

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 184-88; Bartlett, 1985, 47; Collins, 1984, 366.

<sup>75</sup> In Dan 8:5 the fourth kingdom is also described as coming from the west.

<sup>76</sup> LSJ “ἑσπερος,” 697; cf. Thucydides, 6.2.3, Plutarch, Ant. 30.5.

<sup>77</sup> ὁ δὲ οἶκος βλέπει πρὸς ἔω, τὰ δ' ὀπίσθια αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἑσπέραν.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. H. Ringgren, “דָּרֹם,” ThWAT, 3:645–657, 650. Cf. Janowski, 2007, 54.

<sup>79</sup> Agathyllus apud Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Hist. 1.49.2.

ἵκετο δ' Ἀρκαδίην, Νήσω δ' ἐγκάτθετο παῖδας  
δοιάς, Κωδώνης λέκτρα καὶ Ἀνθεμόνης.  
αὐτὸς δ' Ἑσπερίην ἔσυτο χθόνα, γείνατο δ' υἱά  
Ῥωμόλον.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. also Virgil, Aen. 1.520ff: Est locus, Hesperiam Grai cognomine dicunt, terra antiqua, potens armis atque ubere glaebae; Oenotri coluere viri; nunc fama minors Italiam dixisse ducis de nomine gentem.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. LSJ, “Ἑσπερία,” 697.

Within the context of book 12 it refers to Augustus (although of course the Sibyl does not tell us that). Line 15 elaborates on him as 'great Lord of Rome and brave warrior'. The book reviews Roman history from the reign of Augustus, i.e. where book 11 left off, to that of Alexander Severus in 235 CE. The main literary parallels to Sib. Or. 12 can be found in books 3, 5, and 8.<sup>82</sup> However, book 12, though of Jewish provenience, is largely pro-Roman, quite in contrast to book 3. Verses 1-11 of the book are borrowed from book 5. '[T]he influence of book 5.1-51 [which reviews history from Alexander the Great to Hadrian] is evident down to verse 176'<sup>83</sup>. According to Collins book 5 probably originated in Egypt in the first to second century CE and the alternating emphasis on Egypt and Asia which suggests deliberate arrangement.<sup>84</sup> It can be concluded that Sib. Or. 5 borrowed from book 3. Book 12 borrowed from book 5 accordingly. Book 5 and 12 evidently understood the implications made by the Third Sibyl and adjusted the prophecy to their own days. In the case of book 12 it seems very probable that the expression 'from the western sea' is borrowed from book 3 as it is identical to it and - to my knowledge - does not occur anywhere else in the Sibyllines or related literature.

The term ἔσπερος can also be found in line 5 of book 5 of the Sibylline Oracles. In this line the Sibyl sums up the Roman conquest of east and west: ἀντολίη βεβόλητο καὶ ἔσπερίη πολύολβος ('East had been subdued and the West with its stores of wealth'). Here, the Sibyl envisages the Roman Empire at large which prided itself with having subdued East and West alike, a popular propagandistic notion in Roman historiography<sup>85</sup>. However, east and west were not simply geographical points of orientation; they had a highly political connotation. For the Sibyl, east and west likewise do not simply signify the horizontal line. In lines 652-656 she describes the coming of a king from the east that will bring about temporary peace.

Since the Sibyl describes Rome as the kingdom from the western sea perspective demands that she places herself in the East. In that case, the description of Rome as coming from the western sea is little surprising. The western sea is then nothing other than the western Mediterranean whereas the Sibyl seems to be concerned with the fate of the countries of the eastern Mediterranean.

---

<sup>82</sup> Collins, 1984, 444.

<sup>83</sup> Collins, 1984, 443.

<sup>84</sup> Collins, 1984, 391. It should be noted though that Collins locates Sib. Or. 3 in Egypt as well and regards both, book 3 and 5, as 'the two extremities of one tradition in Egyptian Judaism'. I do not agree with regard to the third book.

<sup>85</sup> An opposition between Europe and Asia, i.e. West and East, was developed not least by Herodotus (Hist. 1.4.1-4; 1.1.95). The theme was carried on by Tacitus (Hist. 5.13), and Philo (Legat. 144) among others. Cf. Livy, Hist. 36.17.14; Polybius, Hist. 1.3.6.; 9.10.11; 15.10.2; 31.10.7. By the Roman era the opposition was turned around so that it was predicted that rule would return to the east. Cf. Phlegon apud Lactantius, Inst. 7.15.11; Josephus, B.J. 6.312-314. See also comment on lines 350-400.

In the MT the Mediterranean is called both the western sea (Deut 11:24) and the Great Sea (Josh 1:4) - the latter is also used in Jub 8:15; 9:6 where it likewise denotes the Mediterranean. Again, this is little surprising, as from a Palestinian perspective the Mediterranean lies in the west. However, the Sibyl does not write from a Palestinian perspective but rather from an Asian one. At the end of the book, she identifies herself as the Erythraean Sibyl who ventured from Babylon to Greece.

The theological implications of lines 175-176 are reminiscent of apocalyptic literature. The sea is more than just a geographical reference. Not only is the hostile kingdom described as coming from the western sea, it is also said to be 'white' (λευκή) and 'many-headed' (πολύκρανος). The metaphorical expression ἀρχή | λευκή καὶ πολύκρανος is adopted in book 1 of the Sibyllines. There, the opaque reference is rendered explicitly into Ῥωμαῖος βασιλεὺς (Sib. Or. 1.388).<sup>86</sup> Regardless whether this is an opaque allusion to the senate or the Triumvirate, the reader is reminded of expressions like the one in Revelation 13:1<sup>87</sup> where Rome is described as a beast with seven heads and ten horns ascending from the sea.<sup>88</sup> The text of the Sibyl (and Revelation for that matter) probably has its closest analogy in Dan 7, where 'the Gentile kings are no longer seen as legitimate, if temporary, agents of divine sovereignty. They are now envisaged as beasts of the sea.'<sup>89</sup> Within the context of Daniel, this change in perspective is probably owed to the events connected with the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes; the author no longer believed that it was possible for the Jews to live peacefully under foreign rule. As a Diaspora document, the Third Sibyl envisages the local situation, i.e. the coming of Roman dominion and oppression. The perception of peaceful coexistence is entirely absent with regard to the Romans.<sup>90</sup>

In Ancient Near Eastern creation traditions, the sea often represents the chaos forces which can be represented as mythic dragonlike monsters such as the biblical Leviathan, Rahab, Tehom, Tannin and, in Ugarit, Jam, which is equivalent to the Hebrew word for sea.<sup>91</sup> It can

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 441.

<sup>87</sup> Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ. And I saw a beast rising from the sea and it had ten horns and seven heads (my translation).

<sup>88</sup> Rev 13:1 borrowed this expression from Dan 7:3. The beast, at least in part, is an allusion to the tradition of Leviathan and the sea is ultimately the symbol for chaos. In Sib. Or. 8.85 the term δράκων (dragon), the Leviathan can be described as some kind of dragon, as a symbol for chaos.

In Rev 13:1 the beast from the sea could be understood 'as the Roman governor [...] who arrived each year in the Roman province of Asia, was bound to set foot first in Ephesus and necessarily arrived by boat' (Aune, 1998, 2:733). However, it could also be a general reference to the Roman Empire.

<sup>89</sup> Collins, 1993, 323.

<sup>90</sup> It is implied with the Greeks as they are repeatedly admonished to convert to God and due to the fact that the Sibyl does not reject Diaspora existence. This has to be kept in mind.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Ps 74:14; Job 9:13; Gen 1:2.21; Exod 7:9 (Tannin as snake); Ezek 29:3 (as crocodile); Job 26:12f et al. Cf. Keel/Schroer, 2002, 44, 124 and 131. In creation myths of the ANE victory of a god over the chaos monster that represents the sea is decisive for the formation of the earth. These traditions are echoed in the biblical

be assumed that Sib. Or. 3.176 had these traditions in mind when alluding to Rome as many-headed and coming from the western sea. Although the explicit reference to a beast or dragon has been omitted, the Sibyl's intended readers and/or listeners were supposedly familiar with these traditions. Therefore, the connection πολύκρανος and ἀφ' ἑσπερίου θαλάσσης is not circumstantial. If this theory proves correct, we can observe two important aspects in this verse; the influence of apocalyptic jewish tradition on the one hand, which is on the vertical line, and the political propaganda of the east-west bias on the other, which is on the horizontal line.

The term ἔσπερος recurs in Sib. Or. 3 line 799 where it should likewise be understood in the geographical sense.<sup>92</sup> In lines 796 to 807 the Sibyl describes the signs that will announce the time when her prophecies will be fulfilled. In line 798 and 799 it is said that swords will appear in the sky towards West (ἔσπερον) and East (ἡώς).<sup>93</sup> The appearance of those swords in the according directions points towards universal judgement. The image of a sword as a harbinger of judgment is familiar from biblical tradition.<sup>94</sup> When these signs appear, it will be the end of war which God will bring about, the harbinger of God's judgement and the coming of the divine dominion (807). The latter brings the concept of the Titanomachy, as the beginning of war, and God's final intervention as the end of war full circle.

In line 177 it is said of Rome that it will rule much land (πολλῆς γαίης ἄρξει). In Roman historiography, the claim to world dominion, i.e. all land, is often stressed.<sup>95</sup> The Sibyl picks up on this claim and turns it against Rome. The Sibyl uses the propagandistic language of universal dominion once again. Seen against this background, the usage of the transfer of rulership in Sib. Or. 3 can be analysed. The Sibyl does not acknowledge the Roman claim to world dominion as will become evident through Rome's impending doom. To her, God is the only sovereign ruler of heaven and earth alike. This notion is of particular importance as it has a distinct biblical quality to it. In the Graeco-Roman world power was clearly divided between divine and human rulers. Sib. Or. 3, not unlike other contemporary literature, shows

---

creation narrative in Gen 1. In Hesiod's Theogony creation is also presented as a fight against Chaos. Only in the end Zeus stands victorious over the world with its creation finished. The Sibyl uses this tradition in her version of the creation of the world. However, in her version the struggle against chaos is ongoing until God will send a king from heaven. The Titanomachy represents the root of evil and the beginning of war for mankind.

<sup>92</sup> See comments there.

<sup>93</sup> This translation is supported by Merkel, 2003, 1107. Collins (1984, 379) and Buitenwerf (2003, 245) translate 'evening' and 'morning' instead. However, the temporal aspect is already given by the word ἐννύχτιος (at night) so that the spatial translation for the other two objects seems to be more accurate.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Isa 34:5; Josephus, B.J. 6.288-289; Lactantius, Inst. 7.19.4-5.

<sup>95</sup> For instance Augustus in his Res Gestae claims to have overthrown all land and sea: 'Bella terra et mare civile externaque toto in orbe terrarum saepe gessi.' R. Gest. div. Aug. 4.2, 25.1, 26.4; Lactantius, Inst. 7.15.13.

that all human kings are kings by (the) grace of God. He can put an end to their rule whenever he means to.

It is also said of Rome that it will shake many (πολλοὺς δὲ σαλεύσει).<sup>96</sup> A similar notion can be also observed in Wis 4:19.<sup>97</sup> In Sib. Or. 3, however, the term σαλεύω is used three times in terms of shaking the earth, i.e. earthquakes (675, 714, and 752). In the latter three instances, however, the shaking of the earth is an act of God and can as such be a sign of theophany and impending judgment. In those three occurrences the shaking of the earth, or the ceasing of it respectively, is part God's final judgement. Earthquakes are frequent in the Mediterranean and are therefore a suitable metaphor for divine wrath. In her assessment of the Romans, however, the Sibyl is referring to the impact of the Roman conquest on the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean. The term literally means to shake but has a wide range of figurative meanings such as 'to stir up' (Acts 17:3) or 'shaking out of fear' (Ps 32:8). The latter is probably the closest analogy for the usage in the Third Sibyl; Rome will shake many with fear of its coming.

After that, it is said, that Rome will cause much fear for all kings. From what we have gathered about the verb σαλεύω<sup>98</sup>, line 178 is parallel to line 177. By that the Sibyl probably refers to the kings of the Mediterranean region that were eventually subdued by the Romans, especially the ones she mentioned in lines 167ff above. On a larger scale, the Sibyl may have all kings of the known world in mind, which Rome would later claim to have overthrown. Either way, the extent of the Roman dominion comes to the fore. The Romans are depicted as even more terrible than the Greeks.

Such a strong anti-Roman bias is unusual for a Jewish text from the first century BCE when the temple and its cult were still intact. The negative assessment of the Romans arises from the Sibyl's universal concern: she is a pagan prophetess on behalf of the Jewish God somewhere in the eastern Diaspora during the rise of Rome. If the Sibyl already had the destruction of the temple in 70 CE in mind, it would be expected that she had to say something about it.<sup>99</sup> The Sibyl does not have the loss of the temple in mind but nonetheless she rejects the Roman claims to world dominion not only because they bring war and destruction but because they are an offense of God. It is possible that though that much of the anti-Roman oracles were written under the impression of the conquest of Pompey who conquered Jerusalem in 63 BCE. Be that as it may, the Sibyl is referring to more than just the

<sup>96</sup> The same expression (πολλοὺς ἐσάλευσεν) occurs in Sir 28:14 in a series of poems where it is a warning against speaking double-tongued (which can shake many).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. also Heb 12:16 where it describes an act of God.

<sup>98</sup> Shaking is also a common feature of theophanies. Cf. line 675; Judg 5:4f, Hab 3:6, As. Mos. 10.4.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. comments on lines 324-336 where the Sibyl alludes to the destruction of the Second Temple.

Jewish fate; Rome will cause fear to the kings of the earth (cf. line 167f). The universal outlook of the Sibyl is evident.

Lines 174-181 deal with Rome destroying much gold and silver from many cities, which is probably a reference to taking booty from defeated cities or to the exploitation of the provinces, both of which is subject in lines 350ff. In line 356 Rome is said to be rich in gold. In line 189 they are also said to be greedy (φιλοχρημοσύνη) and to have a love for ill-gotten wealth. The motif of 'love for money' (φιλοχρημοσύνη) is a recurring theme in the book (cf. 234-236 and 236). It is a Graeco-Roman commonplace that greed for money is a source for disaster.<sup>100</sup> According to Pseudo Phocylides, love of money is the mother of all evil (Ἡ φιλοχρημοσύνη μήτηρ κακότητος ἀπάσης).<sup>101</sup> Lines 179-180 and 350ff arise from the same assumption about Roman avarice. Therefore it is probable that both passages have the same *terminus ante quem*, namely the first century BCE.

The Asian nations and kingdoms the Sibyl mentioned in lines 167ff above are all known to have been wealthy in the Hellenistic period. Only during the Roman period they suffered immense exploitation (cf. lines 350ff and comments there). It is possible that lines 179-180 refer to this historical circumstance. In the next line however, the woes that Rome will cause are interrupted when the Sibyl says that there will be gold and embellishment on the earth again. The disasters that Rome will cause are relativised because they are only temporary. Eventually, their fate will be reversed and their dominion destroyed (181).

In line 182a the Sibyl heralds that the Romans will oppress the mortals (καὶ θλίψουσι βροτούς). In the Septuagint the term θλίβω or the noun θλίψις (oppression) acquire theological significance because the reference is usually to the distress of Israel (or the righteous), for instance in Egypt (Ex 4:31), or exile (Deut 4:29). The theme is carried on in the New Testament. In the 'apocalypse' in Mark 13 θλίψις is one of the signs of the coming of the Son of Man.<sup>102</sup>

However, in line 182b it is immediately announced that the Romans will fall because they will feel a necessity to commit all kinds of religious transgressions. The Sibyl uses the term πτώμα to designate the downfall of the Romans. Philo uses it in the sense of the sin of the *nous* or the *psyche*.<sup>103</sup> In light of the following vices, it is clear that the Sibyl has a similar meaning as Philo in mind. Rome's downfall is brought about because of her vices.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Menander, Fragmenta 557; Diodorus Siculus, 37.30; Dio Chrysostom 4.91, 94, 99; 7.103; 10.14; 17.6, 7, 9, 12; 34.53; Philostratus, Vit. Apoll. 1.38; Ps.-Phoc., 42-48; Philo, spec. 1.21-25; 4.65, 215; 1 Tim 6:9-10.

<sup>101</sup> Ps.-Phoc., 42.

<sup>102</sup> Mark 13:19.

<sup>103</sup> Leg. 2.101; Deus 1.130; Agr. 1.110, 171; Ebr. 1.156; Migr. 1.80; Mut. 1.55, 57; Somn. 1.49; 2.281; Abr. 1.266; Ios 1.17; Legat. 1.308.



The Romans will succumb to ἀσέβεια (impiety or ungodliness). The Sibyl speaks of various vices such as homosexuality, and pederasty<sup>104</sup> and attributes them to the Romans.<sup>105</sup> Most of these vices stand in contrast to what the Sibyl is going to say about the pious people (εὐσεβής)<sup>106</sup>. Via the terminology, the Romans are set over against the pious people of God.

These vices serve not only to describe the wickedness but also as a reason for the Romans' ultimate downfall which God will bring about. This pattern recurs throughout the book. For the Third Sibyl 'eschatology and ethics are interdependent'<sup>107</sup>. The fall of the Romans and their vices are tightly connected. The motif of destruction as punishment for sexual and other vices is common in biblical and later Jewish tradition.<sup>108</sup> It is also evident from the term ἀσέβεια that the Sibyl identifies the Roman sexual vices as religious offenses of God.

The Sibyl places importance of two key elements from the Decalogue: the prohibitions of idolatry (and polytheism for that matter) and adultery. Because the Greeks and the Romans transgress both they will be judged for their insolence. In contemporary pseudepigraphic writings, the corrupt sexual vices are commonly seen as deriving from idolatry.<sup>109</sup> In Wisdom 13-15 all possible immorality (πορνεία) is explained as deriving from idolatry.<sup>110</sup> In the Testament of Naphtali the patriarch admonishes his children to be obedient to the law and abstain from idolatry which has led the people astray (πλανηθέντα).<sup>111</sup>

The noun θλίψις recurs in line 187. We have already seen that the term is typical of eschatological scenarios<sup>112</sup> which shows that the Sibyl considers Roman rule as the last and most terrible – an era of warfare and other catastrophic events - before the turn of the tide and the beginning of a peaceful age. In line 188 it is said of Rome that they will cut everything into pieces and fill it up with evil. The keyword is πᾶς (all/everything) which highlights that

<sup>104</sup> Cf. also 202ff; 596-600; 764 and comments there. In Ezek 22:11 ἀσέβεια has a sexual connotation as well.

<sup>105</sup> Originally, an initiation ritual, the social custom called παιδεραστία (= love of boys, LSJ, "παιδεραστία," 1286) by the Greeks was both idealised and criticised in ancient literature and philosophy. In Crete it involved ritual abduction. A man would abduct a youth of his choice to an ἀνδρεῖος, a men's club of meeting hall. Chances are that the Sibyl alludes to this practice in line 186 where she accuses the Romans of homosexuality and putting their children in shameful houses. In Philo, Josephus, and Pseudo Phocylides homosexuality occurs among a list of other sexual vices such as adultery, abortion, and rape (cf. Philo, Hypoth. 7.1; Josephus; C. Ap. 2.198-202; Ps.-Phoc. 3.177-78, 183, 190-91, 198). They, like the Sibyl, draw these from biblical law. However, some Greek thinkers also opted against these practices and it may be argued that the Sibyl took part in a widespread debate of her time. See also Part III: The common law

<sup>106</sup> Cf. line 213. In Sir 37:12 εὐσεβής is an observer of the law (as opposed to ἁρματωλός).

<sup>107</sup> Collins, 1984a, 368.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. n. 33 above; 2 Bar 8:5.

<sup>109</sup> Nissinen, 1998, 90.

<sup>110</sup> See Wis 14:12, 22-27 specifically where the writer includes a number of elements from both the Decalogue and the Holiness Code.

<sup>111</sup> Test. Naph. 3:2-5.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Zeph 1:14-15 LXX; Dan 12:1 LXX; Mark 13:19.

no one and nothing can evade the Roman dominion. Κακόν can mean both, the sinful ways of Rome (cf. lines 183ff) or the bad things they inflict on the people.<sup>113</sup>

Line 189 explains that this evil will be brought about by love of money (φιλοχρημοσύνη) and ill-gotten wealth (κακοκερδής πλοῦτος), one of the recurring schemes in the Third Sibyl (see lines 180-83 above and 234-236, 350-380, and 641-642). The motif of Roman avarice occurs in other sources and could be linked to the Mithridatic wars (see comment on lines 350-380). However, in the section at hand references to historic events are scarce. The Sibyl seems to be more interested in representing world history on a large scale with Rome as the most terrible and hopefully the last of kingdoms that claim world dominion before the establishment of the divine dominion. In the divine dominion, however, wealth will be distributed rightfully this being a common notion with regard to the Golden Age in classical literature.<sup>114</sup>

Towards the end of the section it is said that Macedonia will suffer most of all from the Roman invasion. This may be due to what was said in line 174-175. It is possible to read that the Macedonians will be destroyed at the hands of the Romans (who serve as an instrument of God). If the Romans are not only understood as successors to the Hellenes but also as the divine instrument of punishment, the prediction in line 190 is obvious. The prediction is certainly *ex eventu* and may reflect the situation during the Macedonian wars (214-148 BCE) which resulted with the end of Greek independence and Rome, while still a republic, now possessing an empire throughout the western and central Mediterranean that outnumbered the Roman homelands in Italy.

For the Sibyl, however, it is important that the Greeks and Romans continued to be at war which was first brought into the world by the Titans. Only at the end God will make all war cease (807). This is where the horizontal and the vertical line find their conclusion. Many of the images of the divine dominion towards the end of the book are reversals of the calamities that are outlined in the section at hand and the ones to follow. The Sibyl outlines in detail the unjust claims of the human kings and their offensiveness of God. After all idolatry and ignorance towards God and his law are the sources of all evil. At the end of the book, the horizontal line will be rounded off and the kingdoms destroyed.

---

<sup>113</sup> The term κακός or κακόν in the Third Sibyl can refer to both the immoral behaviour of a nation or the inflictions sent by God (cf. lines 156, 199). Lines 207-208 lack a clearer determination on who will inflict this evil upon the nations mentioned. However, seen in light of the predictions against the Greek kings it could very well be understood as the conquest of Alexander who succeeded the Assyrian and Persian empires (cf. 171-74). An evil fate is also predicted for the Carians and the Pamphylians, both of which were mentioned before in lines 169-70. Cf. lines 179-180, 185-186, 189. In lines 235-236 'evil' is explained as 'war' and 'famine'.

<sup>114</sup> See comments on line 783 and Part III: The law as Utopia.

### 3.9 The seventh king of Egypt and the role of the people of God (192-195)

192 [ἄχρι πρὸς ἑβδομάτην βασιλῆϊδα, ἧς βασιλεύσει  
 193 Αἰγύπτου βασιλεύς, ὃς ἀφ' Ἑλλήνων γένος ἔσται.]<sup>115</sup>  
 194 καὶ τότε ἔθνος μέγαλοιο θεοῦ πάλι καρτερὸν ἔσται,  
 195 οἱ πάντεσσι βροτοῖσι βίου καθοδηγοὶ ἔσονται.

Until the seventh kingdom,  
 which an Egyptian king of Greek decent will rule.  
 And then the people of the Great God will be strong again,  
 they will be moral guides for all mortals.

The period of the Romans is said to come to an end in the seventh kingdom, which will be ruled by an Egyptian king of Greek decent. Curiously enough, the Sibyl uses the verb βασιλεύω rather than ἄρχω (lines 167 and 172). As a matter of fact, the βασιλ-root is used remarkably often in these two lines. In that period, the people of the great God will be strong again (194) and be guides in life for all mortals (195). These last two lines have often been seen in connection with the aforementioned seventh king of Egypt. This has led to the assumption that the Sibyl was referring to the position of the Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt and that they would prosper during the Ptolemaic rule.<sup>116</sup> However, they can also be seen as marking a different period, one that is to come after the seventh king of Egypt. The time in which the people of God will prosper is no other than that in which God will establish his kingship on earth. Furthermore, the usage of καὶ τότε + future verb form hints to that conclusion. The Sibyl uses this figure every time she is talking about a future event.

In line 194 the Sibyl introduces the ἔθνος μέγαλοιο θεοῦ (henceforth the people of God).

It should be noted that ἔθνος does not designate a people in the ethnic sense that we today use. According to LSJ the term designates ‘number of people living together, company, or body of men’; in its broadest sense it can even refer to a flock or swarm of a certain type of animal.<sup>117</sup> However, after Homer, the term is usually used for nation or people, specifically of barbaric (i.e. non-Greek) peoples as opposed to Hellenes. In the LXX it is the common term for non-Jewish peoples derived from the Table of Nations in Gen 10. In the Third Sibyl the term occurs 9 times (lines 172, 194, 515, 516, 519, 520, 598, 636, 663), 3 times it refers to specific nations and 6 times it is used as a collective and refers to all kinds of other nations. In line 194 it refers to the ἔθνος μέγαλοιο θεοῦ. Supposed the Sibyl does not think of the term in the ethnic sense then indeed the people of the great God do not signify an ethnic group. In the LXX and the NT λαός is the term that signifies the Jewish<sup>118</sup> people as opposed to ἔθνος which signifies the non Jewish people. In the Sibyl, on the other hand, λαός refers to the

<sup>115</sup> The brackets appear in Geffcken's edition. He refers to line 608f where the prophecy about the seventh king recurs.

<sup>116</sup> Most prominently Collins, 1974.

<sup>117</sup> LSJ, “ἔθνος,” 480.

<sup>118</sup> In the LXX it occurs some 2000 times, seldom in the plural and with a specific reference to Israel as God's people. In most instances the Hebrew original is עַם. (Cf. “Λαός,” TDNT). The term stresses the special relation of God and his people over the other nations.

people of God as well as to other nations or groups of people (249, 255, 460, 668, 670, and 734).<sup>119</sup>

In lines 194-195 the people of God are introduced as guides in life for all mortals. From the historical overview the Sibyl makes a transition to the particular history of the people of God. It has been suggested by scholars that the role of the people as guides in life for all mortals refers to a political domination at the end of time.<sup>120</sup> However, I propose that the reference is of ethical nature. Nonetheless, it is true that the expression βίου καθοδηγοί (guides in life) could also have a political connotation. It is not uncommon to express loyalty in terms of following one's ways.<sup>121</sup> In light of the political language in the preceding lines, it would be plausible that the Sibyl had the political meaning in mind labelling the people of God 'guides in life for all mortals'.<sup>122</sup> However, as we will see in section III the role of the people of God will not be political. Rather than that, they will be an example to all mankind with regard to their law and ethic superiority. Rather than claiming a political superiority of the people of God over the nations, the Sibyl stresses that without them 'the heathen peoples are doomed'.<sup>123</sup> Towards the end of the book, for instance, there will be numerous appeals to the Greeks to repent in order to be saved from God's wrath. The term καθοδηγός also occurs in Sib. Or. 1.385 and in the LXX.<sup>124</sup> In the Christian First Sibylline Oracle the people of the Great God is described as bringing forth a new race of law-abiding Gentiles and therefore being wise guides (σοφοὶ καθοδηγοὶ ἔσονται). Lightfoot understands this to be a reference to the apostles, deliberately recalling 3.195.<sup>125</sup> It is evident that the First Sibyl did not take Sib. Or. 3.195 as a reference to political superiority but as one to mental and ethical superiority. Instead she took the entire third book as a reference for the role of the people of the Great God. Through the course of the book the role of people will be elaborated on: in section III it

<sup>119</sup> The term δῆμος only occurs with regard to the Jewish people (216, 244, and 725). Since the Sibyl uses a variety of different terms for the Jews and the nations alike this may be purely circumstantial. In the NT δῆμος refers to a people of a place; cf. Acts 12:22 (Jerusalem), 17:5 Thessalonica, 19:30, 30 (Ephesus). There are also two occurrences of φῶλον with regard to the Jews, namely in line 216 and 249 (λαὸς ὁ δωδεκάφυλος). Three other instances of φῶλον show (495, 636, and 677) how general the term can be applied (especially in line 677 where it refers to animals).

<sup>120</sup> 'Possibly the author uses the expression "guides in life" not only in an ethical and theological, but also in a political sense.' (Buitenwerf, 2003, 189).

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Ant. 14.256-258 where the decree of the people of Halicarnassus is quoted: 'Since we have ever a great regard to piety towards God, and to holiness; and since we aim to follow the people of the Romans; who are the benefactors of all men, and what they have written to us about a league of friendship and mutual assistance between the Jews and our city, and that their sacred offices and accustomed festivals and assemblies may be observed by them;' (Marcus, LCL). Cf. Also Barclay, 1996, 259-281.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 189f.

<sup>123</sup> Bartlett, 1984, 39.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Jer 2:6 (God has led the people out of Egypt); Ezek 39:2 (Gog will be led against Israel); and Job 12:23 speaks of a false guide.

<sup>125</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 439.

is described that they shall receive the law of God and that they are doomed should they forsake it. Throughout the book, ethical behaviour is decisive for judgement and salvation. The superiority of the divine law is thereby expressed time and again (lines 218-247, 573-600). Lines 702-731 say that the nations will acknowledge that the people of God are exempt from God's judgement, implying that they too should turn to God. In lines 716-731 two hymns can be found sung by the penitent nations. There, the nations acknowledge that God is the sole ruler and that he loves and protect his people. Therefore, they will send to the temple and observe the law because it is the most righteous on earth (see comment there). In her eulogy of the pious (218-247), the Sibyl will explain why they are blessed by God: it is because they do not indulge in the vices of the Greeks and of other nations.<sup>126</sup> The law facilitates the special relation of the people of God and God.

This passage, along with the others that speak of the seventh reign or king of Egypt, have, since Collin's major publication in 1974<sup>127</sup>, often mislead scholars into believing that the Third Sibyl holds messianic hopes for a Ptolemaic king and that therefore the book must have originated in Egypt, where Jews were mostly privileged under the Ptolemaic dynasty. This assumption, however, is jumping to conclusions. Scholars have subsequently tried to identify the seventh king with a specific Ptolemy which posed more than one problem. However, Gruen rightly noted that neither the Ptolemies themselves nor anyone else enumerated the Ptolemaic kings<sup>128</sup> and that 'the quest for historical specificity has lead researchers astray'.<sup>129</sup> Even if a specific Ptolemaic king cannot be identified with certainty, we can assume that the Sibyl had the Ptolemaic dynasty in mind which was after all the last stable dynasty in the Mediterranean at the time of the Roman expansion.<sup>130</sup> If we locate the Third Sibyl in the first century BCE the author hopes for the restoration of the Jewish people in his own lifetime. However, this does not require Egyptian origin.

The seventh reign is an eschatological time frame rather than a reference to an actual kingdom or king.<sup>131</sup> The seventh reign serves as a setting for the reversal of fortune. The kingdom of Salomon is the place where the one true God was venerated and therefore it is the

---

<sup>126</sup> The entire book is built around this concept. The Sibyl sought an apology for the evil and the injustice that occurred during her lifetime, i.e. the Roman expansion towards the east (cf. lines 175ff, 350ff et al and comments there). Therefore she sets the Roman Republic in the context of (a familiar) Jewish tradition, for example, the sequence of succeeding world empires. However in the end they will all be subdued by God who will erect his heavenly kingdom on earth at the end of time.

<sup>127</sup> Collins, 1974, 35-52.

<sup>128</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 15-36.

<sup>129</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 29.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 189.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Camponovo, 1989, 338.

paragon for the divine dominion to come.<sup>132</sup> However, the Sibyl is not looking for the reestablishment of the Solomonic kingdom, but to an ideal future, a Utopia initiated by God. The law of that kingdom will be that of God<sup>133</sup>, which the εὐσεβεῖς observed in the kingdom of Solomon. The kingdom of Solomon is ideal space, a place where the law was first established as constitution. By the time of the Third Sibyl, however, the kingdom of Solomon had faded into memory and legend, especially in the Diaspora where many Jewish families had lived for generations without ever seeing the homeland. The law has a pivotal place in the Sibyl's setting. The people of God can be moral guides for all mortals due to their special relation to God which they have through the law. The role of the people is not described as one of political importance but as one of moral guidance. The dominion of those virtuously superior is an accepted concept in antiquity and can also be found in the Hebrew Bible and LXX<sup>134</sup> as well as in works of Philo.<sup>135</sup>

The people of God are to be a paragon for the nations so that they too can evade God's judgement and live to see the divine dominion that God will establish at the end of the book. The law, however, constitutes the divine dominion. Without the law there will be no such Utopia. Towards the end of the book the law will be transformed into a 'common' law for all people to keep<sup>136</sup>, whereas previously it was exclusively given to the people of God<sup>137</sup>.

Upon closer examination it becomes clear that the prophecy about the seventh king did not originally belong in this context. Geffcken puts lines 192-93 in brackets and refers to line 608f where the prophecy recurs. Indeed, the prophecy in lines 192-93 is borrowed from 608f to signify the same historical timeframe. Lines 192-93 were inserted between the prophecy about Rome and the role of the people of God that is described in 194-95. Lines 194-95 are separated from the previous passage by the phrase καὶ τότε' + future tense, a formula that the Sibyl often uses to mark the beginning of a new event. 192f are inserted with ἄχρι (until) instead of the usual formula to make it fit the context of the preceding lines. Without the background of lines 608f and the surrounding passages, it is unclear who is meant by the seventh king. I therefore argue that lines 192-93 were inserted here in light of 608f to put the role of the people of God in a specific temporal context.

The statement about the people of the Great God serves as a transition to the next section which briefly repeats the judgement over the Titans and the Greeks followed by a lengthy

---

<sup>132</sup> Cf. lines 767ff.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. line 757f.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Deut 4:6; Zeph 3:9; Sir 17.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Philo, Praem. 97; Holtz, 2007, 152f; see also Part III: The common law, the law as Utopia.

<sup>136</sup> Lines 757f.

<sup>137</sup> Lines 256-58, 767f.

passage about the εὐσεβεῖς (=people of the Great God). They too will be punished for not obeying the law until eventually God will have mercy on them and will return them from the Babylonian exile at the hands of a king from heaven, which is probably a veiled allusion to Cyrus.

### 3.10 Conclusion: the relativisation of dominion of the past

Again, the Sibyl is interested in the relativisation of dominion. The description of events on the horizontal line prepares for the things to happen on the vertical line. The people of God have a special relation to God so that they can be guides in life for all mortals. The law, which will be given in the next section, facilitates that connection. The hubristic nations, on the other hand, will not last in opposition to God. Even though the Roman conquest is an incontrovertible fact, the Sibyl maintains the hope for their inevitable end. Even though the depiction of the Macedon Empire is already very negative, the assessment of Rome is unparalleled. Rome is by far the worst evil that the Sibyl can imagine. This perception of Rome mirrors the first impressions of the Roman conquest in the East. The dreaded foe is said to come from the western sea - from an eastern perspective, nothing other than the western Mediterranean near Greece and beyond can be meant by that.

The Sibyl's predictions about the coming of Greece and Rome are on a horizontal political level. However, on the vertical line, she has absolute confidence that God will smother the Greeks and Romans and that in the age of the seventh Graeco-Egyptian ruler the people of the Great God will be strong again to be moral guides for all men. Here, the real and the imagined intertwine. The 'real' threat of the imperialistic expansion of the Greeks and Romans spawns the utopian idea of the people of God as moral guides that will bring forth a new era and a new generation of law-abiding Gentiles (which will be brought about at the end of the book)<sup>138</sup>. The Sibyl's world is one of unruly kingdoms whose end she hopes for. This is where the horizontal and the vertical line meet: The Greek and Roman dominion are historical facts, the way the Sibyl represents them over against the power of God is on the vertical line. In the mind of the Sibyl, true dominion is restricted to God and his will.

From what we have observed so far, the Sibyl regards the imperialistic ambitions of the empires, especially those of the Graeco-Macedonians and the Romans, as contemptuous of God. God, on the other hand, is the sole ruler, the creator of heaven and earth, and hence the only one with a legitimate claim to world dominion. The Sibyl utilises the propagandistic

---

<sup>138</sup> Cf. lines 757f and 767f.

language of universal dominion and turns the empire's own claims against them. The Romans are the worst of all and hopefully the last in a line of warmongering kingdoms. The Romans, like the Greeks, will be judged, not only because of the war and the misery they cause, but also because of their moral i.e. sexual vices.

The Sibyl represents the kingdoms in a line of succession. This line of succession was a commonplace in antiquity and was used by the empires to propagandistic ends. The Sibyl picks up on this well known scheme and turns it against the hubristic kingdoms. This succession is not merely factual; it is a state of mind. It is the claim to world dominion, the hubris that will bring about their inevitable downfall because it is an offense against God. All of that will happen in a world as the Sibyl imagines it; a world that has geographical boundaries and markers. We have observed that on the horizontal line the Sibyl partakes in what can be considered common geographical knowledge in the Hellenistic era.



## 4 Section III: Lines 196-294

*Lines 196-294*

*The pious men who live around the temple*

### 4.1 Introduction

Section III details the role of the people of God as moral guides for all mortals that was established in Section II. Following a brief introduction to a new prophecy, the Sibyl prophesies against various nations before focussing on the people of God who are designated as the pious who live around the temple. Their special status is constituted by the law, which God gave them from heaven at the hands of Moses. In addition, the Sibyl narrates the history of the people of God from the Exodus, which significantly does not include the taking of the land, to the Babylonian Exile and the eventual return under Cyrus the Great. In the same manner in which God sent Cyrus to return his people from exile, he will send a future king from heaven to avail his people.

#### 4.1.1 Structure

- 196-198 Introduction formula
- 199-212 Oracles against various nations
- 213-217 Oracles against the people of God
- 218-264 Praise of the people of God
- 265-294 History of the people of God
- 286-294 God will send a king from heaven

#### 4.1.2 Introduction of a new prophecy (196-198)

- 196 ἀλλὰ τί μοι καὶ τοῦτο θεὸς νόῳ ἔνθετο λέξαι,
- 197 τί πρῶτον, τί δ' ἔπειτα, τί δ' ὑστάτιον κακὸν ἔσται
- 198 πάντα ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους, τίς δ' ἀρχὴ τούτων ἔσται;

But why did God also put into my mind to say,  
what evil first, what evil subsequently, what evil at last will be  
upon all men, what will be the beginning of this?

The formula in lines 196-198 is not a new introduction formula. Rather, it is the conclusion of the formula in lines 162-164.<sup>1</sup> Lines 196-198 round off the previous passage on the kingdom from the western sea.

#### 4.2 Oracles against various nations (199-212a)

199 πρῶτον Τιτάνεσσι θεὸς κακὸν ἐγγυαλίξει·  
 200 υἱοῖς γὰρ κρατεροῖο δίκας τίσουσι Κρόνοιο,  
 201 οὐνεκά τοι δῆσάν τε Κρόνον καὶ μητέρα κεδνήν.  
 202 δεύτερον αὖθ' Ἑλλήσι τυραννίδες ἡδ' ἀγέρωχοι  
 203 ἔσσονται βασιλῆες, ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄναγνοι,  
 204 κλεψίγαμοι καὶ πάντα κακοί, καὶ οὐκέτι θνητοῖς  
 205 ἄμπαυσις πολέμοιο. Φρύγες δ' ἔκπαγλοι ὀλοῦνται  
 206 πάντες καὶ Τροίη κακὸν ἔσσεται ἥματι κείνῳ.  
 207 αὐτίκα καὶ Πέρσῃσι καὶ Ἀσσυρίοις κακὸν ἥξει  
 208 πάσῃ τ' Αἰγύπτῳ Λιβύῃ τ' ἡδ' Αἰθιοπέσσι  
 209 Καρσί τε Παμφύλοις τε κακὸν μέγα κοινωθῆναι<sup>2</sup>  
 210 καὶ πάντεσσι βροτοῖσι. τί δὴ καθ' ἐν ἐξαγορεύῳ;  
 211 ἀλλ' ὁπότεν τὰ πρῶτα τέλος λάβῃ, αὐτίκα δ' ἔσται  
 212a δεύτερ' ὑπ' ἀνθρώπους.

First God will inflict evil upon the Titans  
 the sons will be punished for their evil deeds against mighty Cronus,  
 because they tied up Cronus and the noble mother.  
 Secondly, the Greeks will have tyrannous and haughty  
 kings, overbearing and impious,  
 adulterous and evil in every respect, no longer  
 will there be respite from the war of mortals.  
 All the terrible Phrygians will perish,  
 and evil will come upon Troy that day.  
 Immediately, evil will also come upon the Persians  
 and the Egyptians, Libya, and the Ethiopians,  
 so that the great evil will be shared  
 among the Carians, and the Pamphylians and all mortals.  
 But why should I tell them out individually?  
 But when the first things have reached their end,  
 The second things will be upon men.

In Lines 199-201 the judgement over the Titans is repeated briefly.<sup>3</sup> This is followed by a series of oracles of doom against various nations, such as the Greeks (202-205a), the Phrygians (205b-206), the Persians and the Assyrians (207), Egypt as well as Libya and Ethiopia (208), the Carians and Pamphylians (209). The list is concluded with καὶ πάντεσσι

<sup>1</sup> Refer to comment and outline there.

<sup>2</sup> Conjecture by Geffcken, 1902a, 59. According to Buitener, 2003, 192.196 the last two words are incomprehensible. Merkel, 2003, 1088 retains the original reading μετακινῆσθαι and translates 'um sich in Unheil zu verwandeln' (to turn themselves into evil).

<sup>3</sup> I will not go into detail here, refer to comments on sections I and II.

βροτοῖσι (210a) - and upon all mortals. This is then followed by a conclusive remark of the Sibyl (210b-212) that she will list them individually<sup>4</sup>, but that once the first things (πρῶτα) come to an end, the second things (δεύτερα) will come to pass immediately. The summary in lines 199-209 is followed by a lengthy passage on the virtues of the people of God (218-264). In line 212b the Sibyl introduces her prophecies concerning the pious as the first thing which she will prophecy (καί τοι πρότιστα βοήσω). However, the denominator second is not picked up again.

The people of God will be punished for not obeying the law. Eventually God will have mercy on them and will let them return from the Babylonian exile at the hands of a king from heaven, which is a veiled allusion to Cyrus. The concept that exile was a punishment of the Israelites for not obeying the law can be found in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>5</sup>

### 4.3 The Macedonians as descendants of the Titans

The Sibyl displays the Macedonians as direct descendants of the Titans whom they venerated as Gods.<sup>6</sup> In lines 199-212 it is explicitly stated that the Greeks are descendants of the Titans. Lines 199-212 sum up in retrospective<sup>7</sup> most what has already been said in sections I and II: first<sup>8</sup> the Titans will perish because they did not heed their father's oath (199-201), the arrogant and impious Greek kings will succeed the Titans (202-205). The condemnation of Greek religion is obvious. The Sibyl criticises the Greeks for their alleged love of war which they inherited from the Titan kings. Like the Titans, the Graeco-Macedonians will be punished for their hubris.

199 πρῶτον Τιτάνεσσι θεὸς κακὸν ἐγγυαλίζει·  
 200 υἱοῖς γὰρ κρατεροῖο δίκας τίσουσι Κρόνιοι,<sup>9</sup>  
 201 οὐνεκά τοι δῆσάν τε Κρόνον καὶ μητέρα κεδνὴν.  
 202 δεύτερον αὖθ' Ἑλλησι τυραννίδες ἡδ' ἀγέρωχοι  
 203 ἔσσονται βασιλῆες, ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄναγνοι,  
 204 κλεψίγαμοι καὶ πάντα κακοί, καὶ οὐκέτι θνητοῖς

<sup>4</sup> Buitenwerf (2003, 196) proposes a possible reconstruction of peoples hidden behind the phrase κακὸν μετακινήθῃναι, probably in light of lines 515-517.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Deut 28.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. lines 383, 403.

<sup>7</sup> The future tense seems to be inconsistent with the author's claim that the Sibyl lived after these events. However, since the line is a summary of an earlier prophecy the future tense may have been chosen for stylistic purposes: everything else in the following lines is narrated in the future tense.

<sup>8</sup> The line is almost identical to 156 where the Sibyl summed up the Titan's fate. However, in line 156 the expression καὶ τότε (and then) was used. Here, the Sibyl recounts the event and intentionally replaces καὶ τότε with πρῶτον (first) because according to the sequence of events, the Titan rule formed the first kingdoms and the first claims to world dominion and therefore started the first war (cf. 154).

<sup>9</sup> I am following Buitenwerf (2003, 195) who in turn follows Alexandre (1856, 110) proposing to read according to the manuscripts (υἱοὶ γὰρ κρατεροῖο Κρόνου τίσουσι δίκας).

205a ἄμπαυσις πολέμοιο.

First God will put the Titans in the hands of evil,  
the sons will be punished for their evil deeds against mighty Cronus,  
because they tied up Cronus and the noble mother.  
Secondly the Greeks will have  
arrogant and impious Kings,  
adulterous and evil in every respect,  
no longer will mortals have rest from war.

In lines 202-204a the nature of the arrogant and impious king is elaborated. In line 204 it is said that the Greek kings are adulterous and evil in every respect (κλεψίγαμοι καὶ πάντα κακοί). The sexual component is noteworthy as it will also bring about the downfall of the Romans (see lines 182-186). Impiety (=idolatry) and adultery bring to mind the Decalogue and Deuteronomy in general.<sup>10</sup>

In lines 204b-205a we also learn that during the Greek reign there will be no pause from war (καὶ οὐκέτι θνητοῖς ἄμπαυσις πολέμοιο), i.e. there will be no rest from war. The clash of the Titans, however, had been the initial beginning of war for men and of world dominion (lines 154-155). Since the Sibyl regards the Greek kings as descendants of the Titans (whom she regards as human kings as well) she heralds that under their rule there will be no rest from war (ἄμπαυσις πολέμοιο). The clash of the Titans, however, had been the initial beginning of war for men and of world dominion (lines 154-155). The sequence in which the Sibyl summarises the events of section I and II shows once again that she perceives Greek rule as a succession to Titan rule. Although she is aware that there were other kingdoms before the advent of the Graeco-Macedonians, her interest in them is as warmongers and heirs to an unjust and arrogant line of deified kings is the decisive element.

A passage in lines 381-400 describes the Macedonian conquest of Asia and the Near East. Alexander and his successors will cause a period of great grieve for Asia and Europe in contrast to the peaceful period that Asia and Europe received in the previous passage in lines 367-380.

383 ἐκ γενεῆς Κρονίδαο νόθων δούλων τε γενέθλης.  
From the race of Cronus, a family of bastards and slaves

The Macedonians are said to be descendants of Cronus, 'a family of bastards and slaves'. The notion that the Greeks are descendants of the Titans is a Greek common place and has already been mentioned in the account of the Titanomachy.<sup>11</sup> In lines 108-161 the Sibyl gave

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Deut 5; 6-10, 18, 21; 22:22, 28f; 31:16 et. al.

<sup>11</sup> In fact, the Greeks believed to be descendants of the Gods who in turn were descendants of the Titans. According to Hesiod's Theogony, Zeus gained dominion by castrating his father Cronus.

a euhemeristic rendition of the Titanomachy (cf. also lines 202-204a and 545-555), rendering them as the first human kings who started the first war of mankind (154-155). The Macedonians will even conquer Babylon. This is not only an allusion to Alexander's historical conquest of the Near East but also a reminiscence of Babylon's fate which was predicted in lines 301f.

In line 386 Macedonia is personified as a woman, who 'will be called mistress (δεσπότις) of every land'. In line 359 Asia was called a δέσποινά whose slave would be Rome. In the MT Nahum refers to Niniveh as a mistress falling from grace (Nah 3:5). In Rev 17 and 18 Babylon (i.e. Rome) is called the great prostitute. The personification of cities, which are traditionally female, is a common theme. Over against this stands the depiction of a maiden in line 785.<sup>12</sup> While the mistress Rome will be turned into a slave, the Macedonian mistress will be destroyed (386).

Another anti-Macedonian oracle can be found in lines 388-400. The passage is commonly believed to deal with Alexander and the Diadochi while some scholars have suggested that the faithless man in the purple cloak (line 388) is a reference to the Jewish arch-enemy Antiochus Epiphanes or that an originally anti-Hellenistic oracle was rendered onto Antiochus by a Jewish editor.<sup>13</sup> Be that as it may, what matters here is the sharp hostility to Hellenic overlordship in the east. 'The Sibyl is concerned with the broader consequences of Macedonian dominance, not with historical peculiarities.'<sup>14</sup> The man in question is described as a faithless man (ἄπιστος) with a purple cloak around his shoulders which marks royal status<sup>15</sup> and hence Alexander's claim for dominion over the East. Therefore Alexander seems to be a likely option. He is said to be savage, a stranger to justice and fiery 'because a thunderbolt raised him'. The latter is a puzzle, however, Buitenwerf suggests a reference in Plutarch where it is said that Alexander's mother had a dream of her womb being hit by a thunderbolt.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, this might very well be a mere description of this ruler's savageness with no relation to the myth in Plutarch's account at all. The adjective ἄπιστος contrasts the pious people of the great God.

The metaphorical description of the Diadochi is that as horns springing off from Alexander (397). The image fits that in the book of Daniel and other apocalyptic literature.<sup>17</sup> The passage is an amalgam of Dan 7:7ff and Greek prophecy.<sup>18</sup> However, it is likely that the metaphor originally stems from Daniel and was adapted by later writers. If the same goes for Sib. Or. 3 is a matter of debate. Due to the similarities to Daniel the oracle has sometimes been taken to refer to the Seleucid period.<sup>19</sup> Even though the Sibyl probably borrowed the image from Dan 7:7-8 it does not follow that the image carries the same significance. 'What matters here is the sharp hostility to Hellenic overlordship in the East'<sup>20</sup>, which is later turned against Rome.

The thrust of the oracle seems to be out of tune with the remainder of the book. It is the one passage in which the Sibyl's oracles are directed against Rome rather than the Graeco-Macedonians.<sup>21</sup> What the passage has in mind and in common with most of the Third Book is the resentment of oppression of the east by foreign rulers, be that Macedonians or Romans. This oracle may very well stem from an earlier period than the ones against Rome, preferably during the Macedonian conquest, and received later Jewish redaction. 'It is best seen as expressing resentment against foreign oppression,

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Isa 35:1; 61:10.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Gauger, 1998, 489.

<sup>14</sup> Gruen, 1998a, 283.

<sup>15</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 228.

<sup>16</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 228 cf. Plutarch, Alex. II 3.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Zech 2:1-4 (LXX); Dan 7:7-8, 24; 1 En. 90:9; Rev 12:3, 13:1, 17:3, 12, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Gauger, 1998, 498.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Gauger, 1998, 498.

<sup>20</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 29.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998b, 29.

wherever it manifests itself in the east.<sup>22</sup> It was probably added to the Third Sibyl because it fits the general tone of her oracles.

#### 4.3.1 Oracles against the pious men who live around the temple (212b-217)

212b ...καὶ τοὶ πρῶτιστα βοήσω.  
 213 ἀνδράσιν εὐσεβέσιν ἥξει κακόν, οἱ περὶ ναόν  
 214 οἰκεῖουσι μέγαν Σολομώνιον οἱ τε δικαίων  
 215 ἀνδρῶν ἔκγονοί εἰσιν<sup>23</sup>· ὁμῶς καὶ τῶνδε βοήσω  
 216 φύλον καὶ γενεὴν πατέρων καὶ δῆμον ἀπάντων  
 217 πάντα περιφραδέως, βροτὲ ποικιλόμητι, δολόφρον.

But first I will proclaim,  
 evil will come upon the pious men who  
 dwell around the great temple of Solomon,  
 who are descendents of righteous men, thus I will proclaim  
 unto the tribe and the race of their fathers and unto the entire people  
 I will do all this very thoughtfully, Oh, wily-minded, crafty mortals.

In line 212b the Sibyl said that she would first make a proclamation about the pious men (ἄνδρες εὐσεβεῖς) who live around the temple of Solomon (οἱ περὶ ναόν οἰκεῖουσι μέγαν Σολομώνιον). This is a reference to the people of God (lines 194-195). The following passage is a summary of biblical history from the Exodus to the building of the second temple during the Persian era. Lines 248-264 tell of the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. 265-293 narrate the Babylonian exile and the return during the Persian reign. The passage concludes with a remark that the temple will again be as it was before, i.e. before it was destroyed, before the exile. Rather than on the land the focus is on the law and the command to obey it. Disobeying it leads to exile and punishment. This Sibyl stays in line with the theology laid out by Deut 28. The focus on the law is furthermore evident from the fact that the Exodus narrative abruptly ends after the account of the giving of the law.

The Sibyl is entirely within deuteronomistic theology when she claims that disobedience to the law leads to the exile and the destruction of the temple. This evokes the theology of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah and throughout the bible the observation of the law serves as guarantee of weal and woe.<sup>24</sup> She tells of the Exodus to the same end: she focuses on the giving of the law on Mount Sinai but she does not mention the Exodus into the land of Israel. In fact, she does not mention the land of Israel at all. The eulogy of the people of God in the

<sup>22</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 29.

<sup>23</sup> A relative clause states that the pious men are descendents of righteous men. Chances are the Sibyl is alluding to the patriarchs as their ancestors. The original beginning of the book may have contained an account of their deeds.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Deut 10:13; 11:8-32; 29:15-28; 30; 32:44-47; Jer 7:1-26; Amos 2:6-16; 6:1-7.

first half of the passage is concluded by a remark that they do all this in fulfilment of the law (246).

The Sibyl says that 'evil will come upon the pious men who live around the temple (οἱ περὶ ναόν οἰκεῖουσιν μέγαν Σολομώνιον) which is clearly a reference to the Jewish temple (213), however, a reference to the whereabouts of the temple is omitted.<sup>25</sup> The only hint towards its location is the denominator Σολομώνιον (of Solomon) so that the temple is part of the kingdom of Solomon which the Sibyl spoke about in lines 167-170. However, the location of the Solomonic kingdom is likewise omitted.

There are two possibilities as to why the Sibyl surpasses the name and the location of the land: 1) she presupposes it as a commonplace. It is evident that her intended readers, namely Jews in the Diaspora, knew just where the temple was. In contrast, the notion that the pious come from Ur of the Chaldeans (line 218) implies otherwise. Furthermore, other places and nations are mentioned frequently so that the omission of epithets regarding Judaism cannot be explained away by the particularities of the sibylline genre.

2) The temple and the land are abstract spaces. Judging from the Sibyl's attitude towards the law and the obedience to it, the importance is not on the land and the temple as physical space but as state of mind of the pious men. The pious live around the temple wherever they are as long as they remain faithful to the law of God. The Diaspora situation of the author(s) (and possible his audience) is reflected in this statement. The pious live around the temple by keeping the law of God and not being led astray. Therefore the people of the Great God, who are identical with the pious men, can be guides in life for all mortals. The temple and the law are on the vertical line. Both constitute the people's relation to God which is defined through monotheistic worship on the one hand (via the temple) and superior ethical praxis (via the law) on the other. The ultimate goal is to bring about the divine dominion on earth.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4.3.2 The righteous people from Ur of the Chaldeans (218-219)

218 ἔστι πόλις ..... κατὰ χθονὸς Οὐρ Χαλδαίων,  
219 ἐξ ἧς δὴ γένος ἔστι δικαιοτάτων ἀνθρώπων,

There is a city in the land of Ur of the Chaldeans,  
Whence comes a race of most righteous men,

<sup>25</sup> Collins has argued that the author may have the temple in Leontopolis in mind. However, unless one locates the Third Book in Egypt this is highly unlikely.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. lines 767ff.

A new section starts in line 218. According to Buitenwerf, lines 218-247 are set in the present tense because of its descriptive character.<sup>27</sup> In this section the Sibyl recounts the history of the γένος δικαιωμάτων ἀνθρώπων. It is evident that the righteous people is to equated with the pious men who live around the temple (213) since the section at hand elaborates on their history and how the destruction of the (first) temple came about.

Line 218 is interesting insofar as it locates the origin of the people of God in Ur of the Chaldeans. ἔστι πόλις ..... κατὰ χθονὸς Οὐρ Χαλδαίων.<sup>28</sup> The line is textually corrupt and based on a conjecture, emending it to the name the city Ur as preserved in Josephus.<sup>29</sup> Ur of Chaldea (χώρα τῶν Χαλδαίων - Mesopotamia) was the birthplace of Abraham.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the designation of the Jews as Chaldeans is familiar from Philo's works, who introduces Moses as Chaldean.<sup>31</sup> In his account of the tower of Babel, Pseudo-Eupolemus mentions that in the tenth generation after the Tower of Babel, Abraham was born in the city of Ur, which is interpreted as a city of the Chaldeans (Οὐρίην, εἶναι δὲ μεθερμηνεομένην Χαλδαίων πόλιν).<sup>32</sup> A similar notion also occurs in Pseudo-Orpheus 22-26 who speaks of one exceptional man of Chaldean origin who, in contrast to all other articulate men (τις θνητῶν μερόπων), is able to see God and knows astronomy and astrology. The identification with Abraham was made by Clement by whom the respective fragment was preserved.<sup>33</sup>

It is curious that this is along with the reference to Mount Sinai in line 256 the only reference in the entire book to the geographical location of the people of God. The land, the city and the temple are not located; they are somewhere. It may be that this was more intelligible to a Greek audience as the Chaldean origin of the Jews was a commonplace in antiquity.

#### **Excursus: The Jews as originators of the Chaldean sciences**

However, the notion that the pious stem from Chaldea also holds a claim for the old age of Judaism. Many Jewish writings from the Hellenistic period onwards exhibit the notion that the Greeks learned philosophy from the Jews and that Abraham taught the Chaldeans the very sciences for which they are famous.<sup>34</sup> The origin of the picture of Abraham as an astronomer or astrologer par excellence probably derives from Gen 15:5. (He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And he said to him, "So shall your offspring be.") merged with the general view that the Chaldeans were the originators of these very sciences.<sup>35</sup> In the

<sup>27</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 197.

<sup>28</sup> Gen 11:1-9; Jub. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Josephus, Ant. 1.151. My reading follows that of Geffcken, Kurfes, Buitenwerf and others.

<sup>30</sup> Gen 11:27-28.

<sup>31</sup> Philo, Mos. 1.5.

<sup>32</sup> Eusebius, Praep. ev. 9.17.3.

<sup>33</sup> Clement, Strom. 5.14.123.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Ant I 168 where it is said that Abraham taught the Egyptians the science of astronomy, which came from the Chaldeans to the Egyptians and from there to the Greeks.

<sup>35</sup> Josephus, Ant. 1.168 cf. Philo, Abr. 32.178.



account of Josephus, Judaism as a whole – for which Abraham stands – is turned into a culture from which Chaldeans, Egyptians and finally Greeks acquired their most important cultural achievements.<sup>36</sup> Wacholder concludes that the belief in Abraham as the master of astrology was a major motif in Jewish folklore that found its way into rabbinic tradition.<sup>37</sup> In the Medieval, Jehuda ha-Levi's *Sefer Kusari* accounts for the ongoing popularity of the motif. The *Kusari* draws from such ideas in his endeavour to claim the antiquity and superiority of Judaism to the Chasars and to defend it against heretics and Karaites.<sup>38</sup> In a fragment by Nicolaus of Damascus, Herod's court historian, preserved by Josephus, the alleged origin of the Jews in Mesopotamia is also recorded.<sup>39</sup> Claiming Chaldean origin for the Jews also is a sign of appraisal, as the Chaldeans were revered by the Greeks as the inventors of astronomic science and medicine.<sup>40</sup> The Chaldeans originally were a tribe of western Semitic origin. After the fall of the Babylonian Empire, however, the term was transferred to the Babylonian astrologers, sorcerers, seers and scholars much esteemed in Rome and Greece. This demonstrates the extent to which astrology and divination were felt to be characteristic of Babylonian culture.<sup>41</sup> Jewish sources of the Hellenistic age would hence often claim Judaism's antiquity over the Chaldean achievements while at the same time often criticising astrology and/or astronomy.<sup>42</sup>

The origin of the Jews in Chaldea is hence not surprising, especially not coming from a pagan prophetess. Since the Sibyl herself is a pagan prophetess she is not afraid to say that the people of God originally came from a pagan city.

However, in lines 221-228a the Sibyl gives an account of various forms of divination that the pious abstain from, Chaldean astrology being one of them (τε Χαλδαίων τὰ προμάντια ἀστρολογοῦσιν), as well as astronomy (οὐδὲ μὲν ἀστρονομοῦσι).<sup>43</sup> As we have seen, other Jewish texts from the Hellenistic age are less strict about these sciences and turn Abraham into their originator.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>36</sup> According to Jub. 12.16-17 Abraham discovered the laws of astronomy. Pseudo-Eupolemus likewise knows of Abraham as the discoverer of astrology and that he taught it to the Egyptians priests and to the Phoenicians (ap. Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.17.3 cf. 19.18.2). According to Artapanus he taught Pharaoh astrology (ibid. 9.18.1).

<sup>37</sup> See Wacholder, 1963, 103 n. 130. Cf. t. Qidd. 5.17; Rabb. 43.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Bloch, 2009, 469.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.159-160.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.14.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Deut. 1:4; 2:2,4; Diodorus Siculus, 2.29.31; Diogenes Laertius, 1.1.6; Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.181.183.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Line 221-228a and comment. Deut 18:10-11.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Ps.-Philo, *Bib. Ant.* 4.16-17 who notes the beginning of astrology at the end of the Table of Nations. He ends the Table of Nations with Abraham's father Terah who lived in Ur which may have inspired him to insert his negative assessment of astrology here.

<sup>44</sup> In Josephus, *Ant.* 1.167-168 Abraham teaches the Egyptians arithmetic and astronomy, which the Egyptians were ignorant of before. The knowledge was then transferred from the Egyptians to the Greeks. Cf. Also *Ant.* 1.106 where it is said that the patriarchs lived that long '... Because it was beneficial for the discoveries that they made in astronomy and geometry, that, indeed, they could not have predicted accurately if they had not lived 600 years, [...] God granted them a longer life.' Translation following Mason, 2000, 38. Philo grants Abraham knowledge of astrology because the Chaldeans were so famous (Philo, *Migr.* 32.178). Pseudo-Eupolemus claims that Abraham discovered astrology and that he introduced the Egyptian priests to it while he was in Heliopolis (ap. Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.17.3-17.8). In Artapanus' version, Abraham teaches Pharaoh astrology (ibid. 9.18.1). According to Jub. 12:16-17 Abraham discovered the laws of astronomy. See also: The common law.

#### 4.4 Things that lead astray: the law as the way of God (220-233)

220 οἷσιν ἀεὶ βουλή τ' ἀγαθὴ καλὰ τ' ἔργα μέμνηεν.  
 221 οὔτε γὰρ ἡελίου κύκλιον δρόμον οὔτε σελήνης  
 222 οὔτε πελώρια ἔργα μεριμνῶσιν κατὰ γαίης<sup>45</sup>  
 ...  
 227 οὐδὲ τε Χαλδαίων τὰ προμάντια ἀστρολογοῦσιν  
 228 οὐδὲ μὲν ἀστρονομοῦσι· τὰ γὰρ πλάνα πάντα πέφυκεν,  
 229 ὅσσα κεν ἄφρονες ἄνδρες ἐρευνῶσι κατ' ἡμᾶρ  
 230 ψυχὰς γυμνάζοντες ἐς οὐδὲν χρήσιμον ἔργον·  
 231 καὶ ῥα πλάνας ἐδίδαξαν ἀεικελίους ἀνθρώπους  
 232 ἐξ ὧν δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ βροτοῖς πέλεται κατὰ γαῖαν,  
 233 τοῦ πεπλανῆσθαι ὁδούς τ' ἀγαθὰς καὶ ἔργα δίκαια.

They are always concerned with good will and noble deeds  
 And do not search for the cyclic course of the sun or the moon  
 Nor for the monstrous things under the earth

...  
 They do not practice the astrological predictions of the Chaldeans  
 nor astronomy. For all these things lead one astray,  
 such as foolish men search after every day,  
 exercising themselves in profitless work.  
 And indeed they have taught deceit to shameful men,  
 from which much evil will come upon the mortals on earth,  
 so that they are led astray from the good ways and righteous deeds.

The virtues of the pious are described *via negationis*. Lines 221-228a describe the things that they do not do. Even though the pious are introduced as a race of most righteous men from Ur in Chaldea they abstain from astronomy and astrology as well as other kinds of divinations (lines 220-228) because these things grow deceit (πλάνη), i.e. deceptive belief.<sup>47</sup> I opt for this translation of πλάνη as it matches its use in the LXX and the New Testament and should be regarded inside its Jewish context of transgression against God.<sup>48</sup> In the Testament of Naphtali the patriarch admonishes his children to be obedient to the law and abstain from idolatry which has led the people astray.<sup>49</sup>

In Greek literature, on the other hand, the Chaldeans are venerated for having invented astronomy, astrology and other sciences. According to the Sibyl, however, these things lead one astray, i.e. away from the law of God.<sup>50</sup> The list of divinations is followed by a list of examples that exhibit the superior ethical behaviour of the pious based on the law. The theme

<sup>45</sup> In the Third Sibyl κατὰ and genitive means 'under' (Buitenwerf, 2003, 199).

<sup>46</sup> Lines 223-226 will not be discussed in detail for reasons of scope.

<sup>47</sup> The meanings of πλανᾶω and πλάνη focus primarily upon the misleading or deceptive views which people are caused to have. Cf. L&N "πλάνη," 31.10. Cf. Mark 13:5; 2 Pet 3:17; Josephus, B.J. 1-290; Ant. 10.19; Apoc. El. (H) 1.14.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Tob 5:13; Prv 14:8; Wis 1:12; 12:14; Jer 23:17; Ezek 33:10; Matt 27:64; Rom 1:27; Eph 4:14; 1 Thess 2:3; 2 Thess 2:11; Jas 5:20; 2 Pet 2:18; 3:17; 1 John 4:6.

<sup>49</sup> Test. Naph. 3:2-5.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Lines 231, 276, 721.

that divination leads to unethical behaviour because it leads away from God and his law is biblical.<sup>51</sup> Gauger notes a parallel to the *Oracula Chaldaica*<sup>52</sup> and Lactantius refers to the Sibyl when he condemns divination.<sup>53</sup> Hellenistic Judaism, however, often displays a different attitude.

The strong segregation from astronomy and astrology that the Sibyl exhibits is a little surprising compared to other Jewish texts from the Diaspora at that time. Hellenistic Judaism was in fact rather open-minded towards these things than for instance biblical and rabbinic Judaism. However, the Sibyl is of the opinion that such things lead one astray from the good ways, i.e. from the law (233).<sup>54</sup> It may be argued that the Sibyl sees herself in light of the biblical prophets rather than in light of her supposed gentile origin.

In line 228 the Sibyl says that foolish men (ἄφρονες ἄνδρες) search after these things. Those have taught deceit (πλάνη) from which much evil came upon men on earth because they are mislead (πεπλανήσθαι) in regard to righteous deeds and the good ways. In the LXX the term ἄφρων occurs particularly often in wisdom texts such as Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, and Sirach. In the Psalms, it designates the fool who denies God and is a translation of the Hebrew נָבִיל.<sup>55</sup> In the wisdom texts, on the other hand, ἄφρων is used for different Hebrew expressions.<sup>56</sup> The LXX does not seem to distinguish as sharply as the Hebrew text. In Prov, the ἄφρων hates knowledge (Prov 1:22) and therefore does not chose the fear of God (Prov 1:29) and will be slain (Prov 1:32). A foolish man goes in a way that is not good (Prov 6:12). The just ways, that is the way of God which is the law, is a recurring metaphor through the course of the third sibylline book.<sup>57</sup>

The pious, however, devote themselves to good will (ἀγαθὴ βουλή). In the Third Sibyl, βουλή refers to the divine will. The Sibyl also speaks explicitly of ‘Υψίστοιο βουλή.<sup>58</sup> It is evident that ἀγαθὴ βουλή is equal to ‘Υψίστοιο βουλή. The divine will is mediated through the law. Therefore it is reasonable to argue that the good council and the will of God is the

<sup>51</sup> cf. Deut 18:10, Lev 19:31, 20:6,27, Num 23:23, 2 En. 10:4.

<sup>52</sup> Gauger, 1998, 495. Cf. Chal. Or. frg. 107. Critical text and commentary in Majercik, 1989.

<sup>53</sup> Lactantius, Inst. 2.16.1.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. line 231, 276

<sup>55</sup> Ps 13:1; 53:2; 73:18, 22; 91:6.

<sup>56</sup> The noun is only found in Eccl and Prov. In Prov three words are rendered fool, כְּסִיל, referring to the dull or obstinate one, referring not to mental deficiency, but to a propensity to make wrong choices, אִיל, refers to moral insolence, and נָבִיל, to the boorish man of mean disposition.

<sup>57</sup> See also comment on lines 721-723, 777-779.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. lines 574, 584, 590.

law.<sup>59</sup> The opposite is κακή βουλή which is condemned repeatedly.<sup>60</sup> From line 590 it is evident that committing idolatry is being void of βουλή.

The 'foolish men' (231) who practice astronomy and the righteous deeds of the pious are intentionally juxtaposed to strengthen the superiority of the Mosaic Law and those who follow it and to diminish those who do not. The Sibyl uses the lemma πλανάω three times in this section. Not following the law of God and practicing the Chaldean divinations leads astray from the way of God (i.e. the law) and ultimately to judgement and doom. However, the people of God are not per se immune to God's judgement either. In line 276 it is predicted that they will go into exile and that the temple will be destroyed because they were led astray (πλανάω) as well.<sup>61</sup>

It seems as though the Sibyl is holding up against the notion that Abraham, the traditional ancestor of the Jewish people, was wised in astrology and taught it to the Egyptians and Greeks. The Sibyl considers astrology as sin in light of biblical tradition. The section can very well be understood as polemics against those who exhibit a favourable attitude towards the ancient sciences.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4.5 The law is righteousness and virtue (234-247)

234 οἱ δὲ μεριμνῶσιν τε δικαιοσύνην τ' ἀρετὴν τε,  
 235 κοῦ φιλοχρημοσύνην, ἥτις κακὰ μυρία τίκτει  
 236 θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις, πόλεμον καὶ λιμὸν ἄπειρον.  
 237 τοῖσι δὲ μέτρα δίκαια πέλει κατ' ἀγρούς τε πόλεις τε,  
 238 οὐδὲ κατ' ἀλλήλων νυκτοκλοπίας τελέουσιν  
 239 οὐδ' ἀγέλας ἐλάουσι βοῶν ὀίων τε καὶ αἰγῶν  
 240 οὐδὲ ὄρους γαίης γείτων τοῦ γείτονος αἶρει  
 241 οὐδὲ πολὺν πλουτῶν τις ἀνὴρ τὸν ἐλάττονα λυπεῖ,  
 242 οὐδέ γε χήρας θλίβει μᾶλλον δ' αὖτε βοηθεῖ  
 243 αἰεὶ ἐπαρκείων σίτῳ οἴνῳ καὶ ἐλαίῳ·  
 244 αἰεὶ δ' ὄλβιος ἐν δήμῳ τοῖς μηδὲν ἔχουσιν,  
 245 ἀλλὰ πενιχρομένοισι, θέρους ἀπόμοιραν ἰάλλει,  
 246 πληροῦντες μέγαλοιο θεοῦ φάτιν, ἔννομον ὕμνον·  
 247 πᾶσι γὰρ Οὐράνιος κοινὴν ἐτελέσσατο γαῖαν.

They, however, care for righteousness and virtue  
 and not for love of money, which begets infinite evil  
 for mortal men, war and limitless famine.  
 They have just measures in their fields and cities,

<sup>59</sup> According to LSJ βουλή means will or determination especially of the Gods (Homer, Il. 1.5. etc.). In the LXX it refers to "divine counsel" (Job 38:2; Prov 19:18; Isa 5:19; 14:26; 46:10; Jer 29:21) among other things. However, the combination κακή βουλή or καλή βουλή only occurs in Prov 2:11 and 2:17 and is not in the MT text. In classical Greek literature there are numerous occurrences for ἀγαθὴ βουλή ever since Homer. Cf. also Wis 6:4 for βουλή θεοῦ.

<sup>60</sup> 366, 590.

<sup>61</sup> See comment there.

<sup>62</sup> See also Part III: The common law.

they do not rob each other at night,  
 nor drive off herds of oxen, sheep or goats.  
 Nor does a neighbour move the boundaries of their neighbour's land  
 nor does a rich man grieve a lesser man,  
 nor oppress widows, rather helps them,  
 always helping with grain, wine and olive oil,  
 always a wealthy man among the people gives a share of the harvest  
 to those who have nothing, but are poor,  
 fulfilling the word of the great God, the hymn of the law.  
 For the Heavenly has given the earth to all in common.

The Sibyl then goes on to describe the righteous deeds of the pious. The ethical laws described in this section are set over against the astronomy and divination practices described in the above section. The righteous do not practice any of the above vices and are not led astray; instead they are concerned about righteousness and virtue. They are set over against the foolish men who practice deceit (line 229) which is evident from the οἱ δέ figure in line 234.<sup>63</sup>

The deeds of the righteous described in lines 234-244 are all derived from biblical law, most of them deriving from sections on agricultural law, like leaving part of the harvest for the poor or not crossing each other's boundaries<sup>64</sup>. It is also said that they do not drive away (they do not steal)<sup>65</sup> each other's cattle.<sup>66</sup> However, there are also similarities to the depiction of the ideal Golden Age in Hesiod's *Opera et Dies*<sup>67</sup>.

In line 235 the deeds of the righteous are contrasted with the 'love of money' (φιλοχρημοσύνη) of the nations which is the cause of countless evils for mankind (235-236). This motif has already occurred in line 189 with regard to the Romans and is a Greco-Roman commonplace. In lines 350ff the Romans are also accused for their avarice. The motif also recurs in 641-42. In the predictions against the Greeks and Romans in lines 171-191 and 199-206 the Sibyl has announced their judgement due to ethical misbehaviour. She now contrasts the pious with the nations. In lines 194-195 the Sibyl announced that the people of God would be guides in life for all mortals. The section at hand explains in detail how they are a moral example for all mankind. It is because they obey the holy law which is based on the principal

---

<sup>63</sup> Cf. BDR, §447.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Exod 22:21-22; Lev 19:35-36; Deut 19:14; 25:13-15; 26:12; 27:17.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. also Homer, Od. 2.56; 17.535 for the expression.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Exod 20:17; 21:33-37; Job 24:2-3.

<sup>67</sup> Hesiod, Op. 106-201. See comment on lines 263, 744-756, 767ff and Part III: The law as Utopia for details.

that God has given the earth to all people in common (line 247, 261), not to be divided and fought over.<sup>68</sup>

The expression 'in fields and cities' (κατ' ἀγρούς τε πόλεις) in line 237 is a merism describing the land as a whole.<sup>69</sup> It recurs in lines 581, 707, and 750. The Sibyl intentionally uses the polar formulation 'cities and countryside', like she uses that of sea and land.

The Sibyl concludes the passage with a statement that the righteous, by acting the way described above, fulfil the word of the great God. The φάτις of God is no other than the biblical law, which is evident from the apposition in line 246b (ἔννομον ὅμνον). The term φάτις is used in three other instances<sup>70</sup> where it designates the divine command for the Sibyl to prophesy. The divine origin of the law is stressed here. Furthermore, the divine law is the basis for the moral excellence of the righteous whereas false belief is the basis for all immoral conduct. The phrase 'word of the Great God' and 'hymn of the law' point towards the divine origin of the law from which the moral excellence of the people of God derives.<sup>71</sup>

The emphasis on the ethical law was commonplace in Hellenistic Judaism. According to pseudo-Aristeas, it is the purpose of the law to provide a good way of life.<sup>72</sup> In Wis, a similar tendency to emphasise the ethical aspects of the law can be discerned.<sup>73</sup> The Sibyl stresses the ethical laws to make the law apprehensible and applicable for non-Jews. For them the cultic laws like dietary laws or circumcision, would have been strange, difficult and often impractical. The marginalisation of the cultic and ritual law in Hellenistic Judaism is a noteworthy trait especially in light of early Christianity, which eventually forsook the law altogether, and rabbinic Judaism, which made the law the central focus of Judaism after the destruction of the Second Temple. In the gospel of Matthew where Jesus' stress on the law is exclusively on the ethical laws so that it becomes inclusive for the non-Jews in Matthew's community.<sup>74</sup> Apparently a need was felt in Hellenistic Judaism to be less exclusive and more inclusive - especially in the Diaspora where the interaction with non-Jews occurred on a daily basis. Polemic tones against this development are vividly explored in 1 and 2 Maccabees. The existence of proselytes and so-called "god-fearers"<sup>75</sup> in the Diaspora shows that Judaism was

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Ovid. Metam. 1.90-112; Plutarch, Alex. fort. 1.6 (329A); Musonius apud Stobaeus, Anthologium 3.40.9. See also Part III: The common law.

<sup>69</sup> More precisely the city and its adjacent territory. Cf. Homer, Od. 8.560; 17.18.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. 162, 297, 490.

<sup>71</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 202.

<sup>72</sup> Let. Aris. 127: τὸ γὰρ καλῶς ζῆν ἐν τῷ τὰ νόμιμα συντηρεῖν εἶναι. Pseudo-Aristeas furthermore interprets some laws by allegory (147, 148, 151, 159, 161, 168). Cf. Weber, 2000, 132, 135.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Wis 1:1-3, 9, 12; 3:1; 8:2-16; 18:4.

<sup>74</sup> For further reading see Konradt, 2007.

<sup>75</sup> For sources and discussion see for instance Wander, 1998; Mitchell 2010. See also Stemberger, 1999 (review).

indeed attractive to outsiders.<sup>76</sup> Some Diaspora Jews may have felt the need to encourage that development.<sup>77</sup>

The passage on the deeds of the righteous and their law obedience is concluded by the statement that God gave the earth to all people in common. This line is repeated in line 261 (see below). Once again, the Sibyl's universal interest is stressed. God, on the other hand, is the only sovereign ruler and the lawgiver. The Sibyl relativises all human dominion by stating that God's law is spellbinding for all people. Those who do not obey it will be punished and destroyed. The people of the Great God are the ethical measure for all people. Rather than a political entity, they are an ethical entity. They are 'guides in life for all mortals' (line 194).

#### 4.6 The history of the pious (248-294)

##### 4.6.1 The Exodus narrative (248-264)

248 ἡνίκα δ' Αἴγυπτον λείψει καὶ ἀταρπὸν ὁδεύσει  
 249 λαὸς ὁ δωδεκάφυλος ἐν ἡγεμόσιν θεοπέμπτοις  
 250 ἐν στύλῳ πυρόεντι τὸ νυκτερινὸν διοδεύων  
 251 καὶ στύλῳ νεφέλης πᾶν ἡὼς ἡμᾶρ ὁδεύσει,  
 252 τοῦτ' ὃ δ' ἡγητῆρα καταστήσει μέγαν ἄνδρα  
 253 Μωσῆν, ὃν παρ' ἔλους βασιλὶς εὐροῦς' ἐκόμιζεν,  
 254 θρεψαμένη δ' υἱὸν ἐκαλέσσατο. ἡνίκα δ' ἦλθεν  
 255 λαὸν ὃδ' ἡγεμονῶν, ὃν ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου θεὸς ἤγεν  
 256 εἰς τὸ ὄρος Σινᾶ, καὶ τὸν νόμον οὐρανόθι πρό  
 257 δῶκε θεὸς γράψας πλαξὶν δυσὶ πάντα δίκαια,  
 258 καὶ προσέταξε ποιεῖν· καὶ ἦν ἄρα τις παρακούση,  
 259 ἢ ἐν νόμῳ τίσειε δίκην ἢ χερσὶ βροτείαις  
 260 ἢ ἐλθὼν θνητοὺς πάσῃ δίκῃ ἐξαπολεῖται.  
 [261 πᾶσι γὰρ Οὐράνιος κοινὴν ἐτελέσσατο γαῖαν  
 262 καὶ πίστιν καὶ ἄριστον ἐνὶ στήθεσσι νόημα·]<sup>78</sup>  
 263 τοῖσι μόνοις καρπὸν τελέθει ζεῖδωρος ἄρουρα  
 264 ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς ἑκατόν, τελέθοντό τε μέτρα θεοῖο.

When the people of the twelve tribes will leave Egypt  
 and will travel the path with guides sent by God  
 travelling along at night with a pillar of fire  
 and when they will travel with a pillar of cloud all day long when they travel,  
 he will appoint the great man Moses as leader over them  
 whom a queen found by the marshes and took care of him,  
 reared him and called him her son. When he came  
 guiding the people that God led from Egypt

<sup>76</sup> Cf. IJO II 14; According to Josephus, Judaism was particularly attractive for women: Josephus, Ant. 18.65-84; 20.34-38, 195.

<sup>77</sup> See also Part III: The common law.

<sup>78</sup> The phrase from line 247 is repeated in line 261. According to Geffcken lines 261 and 262 were copied from lines 247 and 585 respectively to fill a lacuna in the text. Lines 261-262 were probably inserted here to lay a frame around the Exodus narrative.

came to mount Sinai, God also gave the law from heaven  
 written on two tablets all the just things  
 and commanded to do (them). And if anyone does not take heed,  
 he will be punished either by justice or by the hands of mortal men  
 or if he is hidden from the mortals he will be destroyed in all justice.  
 For them alone the fertile earth yields fruit,  
 from one to a hundred, and the measures of God are fulfilled.

Lines 248-264 describe the Exodus from Egypt. In line 248, the Sibyl switches back to the future tense saying that the people will leave Egypt (λείψει), which indicates that from the point of view of the Sibyl the following events are yet to come. The Sibyl picks up on the Exodus motif as a decisive moment in biblical history. However, her focus is on the giving on the law rather than on entering the land.

In line 249a the Sibyl refers to as λαὸς ὁ δωδεκάφυλος, the twelve tribe people (i.e. the people consisting of twelve tribes). This expression is quite unusual and has only two other occurrences, namely in Acts 26:7 and 1 Clem 55:6. The term δωδεκάφυλος is not particularly common - in its present form it is a collective.<sup>79</sup> The LXX frequently uses δώδεκα φυλάς. In 1 Clem 55:6 the substantivised form is preserved (τὸ δωδεκάφυλον τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ).<sup>80</sup> Josephus records that while only two tribes of the Jews subject to the Romans are in Asia and Europe ten more remain beyond the Euphrates and contain of a large number.<sup>81</sup> In Sib. Or. 2.171 a similar expression is used: ἡνίκα δὴ δεκάφυλος ἀπ' ἀντολῆς λαὸς ἔξει (when a people of ten tribes will come from the east). In the Second Sibyl, the ten tribes, who were destroyed by the shoot of Assyria,<sup>82</sup> are said to come from the east and seek their fellow Hebrews. The analogous τετράφυλος and δεκάφυλος can be found in Herodotus.<sup>83</sup>

In Acts 26 Paul speaks of the twelve tribes in hope of their restoration defending himself in front of Agrippa against fellow Jews.<sup>84</sup> The restoration of Israel is one of the key beliefs of Judaism in the second temple period and of early Christianity. At the time of the Exodus, the proverbial twelve tribes were still intact in the form of the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. The Sibyl does not tell us whether or not she looks to the return of the ten lost tribes. From what she says about the tribes it is not even evident that they were lost in the first place. However, the gathering of the lost tribes is tightly connected with the land of Israel. The Sibyl has no apparent interest in the return of the Jews to Israel (see above). As we have it, the designation λαὸς ὁ δωδεκάφυλος is merely another metaphor to describe the Jewish people, which she never mentions explicitly.

It is said that the λαὸς ὁ δωδεκάφυλος will leave Egypt and will move eastwards to Sinai. They will travel with guides (ἡγεμόσιν) sent by God (249). In light of lines 250 and 251 these guides are the pillar of fire at night and the pillar of cloud in the daytime. In Exod 13:21-22, God leads (ἡγέομαι) the people by means of the two pillars. The pillars also represent God's

<sup>79</sup> See BDR, §138.1.

<sup>80</sup> In 1 Clem 55:6 it is used in a revision of the faith of Esther, who saved the twelve tribes of Israel. In 1 Clem 34:1 it is said that the sceptre of the twelve tribes (δωδεκάσκηπτρον) was given to Jacob when he left Laban.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Josephus, Ant. 11.133.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. 4 Ezra 13.40; As. Mos. 4.9.

<sup>83</sup> Herodotus, Hist. 5.66.2

<sup>84</sup> Note that Paul is not being accused for maintaining the Jewish hope in restoration and resurrection but for holding it fulfilled by Jesus (Barrett, 1994, 2:1153).



very presence.<sup>85</sup> However, the Sibyl lessens the theophanic aspect a little by claiming that the pillars are guides (ἡγεμόσιν) sent by God. Once again God directs the unfolding events.

In lines 252-253, the Sibyl introduces Moses who is the only character in the entire book, except for the Sibyl herself, whose name is mentioned explicitly. Moses is said to be a great man (ἀνὴρ μέγας) whom God will appoint leader (ἡγητήρ) of the people (252). This main clause is followed by a train of subordinate clauses related in the past tense. According to Buitenwerf, this is to show that these things will happen before the event in the main clause, i.e. the appointment of Moses as leader of the people.<sup>86</sup> The Sibyl is apparently familiar with the biblical Moses narrative according to which he was raised by a princess who found him in the marshes and reared him as her son (253-254). She, however, omits important details of the narrative like the killing of the first born sons of the Hebrews in Egypt or the ten plagues.

Line 255 plays on words. It uses the term ἄγω in its twofold meaning. On the one hand, God led (ἤγευ) the people out of Egypt. On the other hand, Moses was appointed their leader (ἡγεμονῶν). The people are referred to as λαός which in the LXX and NT is the common term for the people of Israel as opposed to ἔθνος which (in the plural) designates the non-Jews.<sup>87</sup> In the Third Sibyl, however, the term is used for the people of God (194) and the nations alike (172, 515, 520, 598, 636, and 663).

The usage of the Aorist in the main clause in lines 254-258 is confusing as one would expect the giving of the law to be in the future tense. Either 'the author betrays his own standpoint'<sup>88</sup>, or he simply uses the Aorist, which has no particular temporal meaning<sup>89</sup>, more freely. However, the giving (δῶκε) and the commanding (προσέταξε) of the law in the Aorist tense could be highlighting its durative aspect<sup>90</sup> so that both actions are continuous in the sense that God is and always will be the lawgiver and that his commandment to heed it is eternal. 'Eine für alle Zeiten gültige Handlung kann durch den Aorist ausgedrückt werden.'<sup>91</sup> Lines 254b-256a are temporal subordinate clauses accordingly.

Lightfoot notes that in this section 'the Sibyl is not trying as hard to be a Sibyl anymore. On the contrary, she uses biblical literary forms - the judgement oracle, the oracle against

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Exod 13:21; Num 14:14.

<sup>86</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 203.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Gen 14:16; 19:4; 23:7,12,13 (it should be noted that λαός has some 2000 occurrences in the LXX); Matt 4:23; 13:15; Mark 7:6; Luke 2:10; John 11:50.

<sup>88</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 203.

<sup>89</sup> Unlike germanic languages like English or German, Greek originally had no tenses but *Aktionsarten* (lexical aspects): 'Die ursprüngliche Funktion der sogenannten Tempusstämme des Verbums war in den indogermanischen Sprachen nicht die von Zeitstufen (Gegenwart, Vergangenheit, Zukunft), sondern die von Aktionsarten (Arten der Handlung) oder Aspekten (Betrachtungsweisen); vgl. das Hebräische.' (BDR, §318).

<sup>90</sup> Cf. BDR, §318.1.

<sup>91</sup> BDR, §333.1.

foreign nations - and the vocabulary and rhetorical structures and syntax associated with those forms<sup>92</sup>. In the Moses story, the Sibyl hesitates between narrative and prediction. It is here 'that the oracle turns from past to future tenses, that future being largely a matter of judgement and punishment'<sup>93</sup>. The major importance of the Exodus in the Sibyl's version is, therefore, not the *Eisodus* into the land of Israel but the giving of the law on Mount Sinai at the hands of Moses and the command to keep it (252-258a). Along with Ur Chaldea, Mount Sinai<sup>94</sup> is the only location mentioned explicitly with regard to the people of God. However, the land of Israel as well as the people's entry into it is omitted.

On arrival at Mount Sinai (line 256), God gives the law from heaven (οὐρανόθι πρό)<sup>95</sup>, which again stresses the divine origin of the law given to the people.

The Sibyl's concern is the movement of the people from Egypt to Sinai where they received the law from heaven under the leadership of Moses. Sibyl talked at length about this as well in the previous section. It is the vertical line that is in focus here. The divine origin of the law is obvious because it is given from heaven at the hands of God.

The horizontal line, on the other hand, is represented by the movement of the people out of Egypt towards Sinai - however, it is not said that from thereon they wandered on to the land of Israel. The Sibyl is not interested in that.

On the vertical line the law is given from heaven by God to Moses. It is curious that Moses does not appear as the lawgiver as he does in most other Jewish texts of the Hellenistic age dealing with the subject matter.<sup>96</sup> God is the lawgiver while Moses is the one that led the people to Sinai. It is not even said whether God gave it to Moses or directly to the people but the transmission through Moses is probably presupposed.

Lines 263-264 are contextually problematic because they have no grammatical connection to the previous lines (regardless whether or not one leaves out lines 261-262). It seems as though lines 262-264 were once part of a longer sentence. Even so it can be deduced that the genitive τοῖσι in line 263 is a reference the people of God, namely the ones that adhere to the law. Lines 263-4 highlight once more the connection between righteous praxis and God's benevolence. In line 263 the Sibyl draws directly on Hesiod's opera (καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ζείδωρος)<sup>97</sup>. In Hesiod's Opera abundant fertility was provided for the golden race, the ideal

<sup>92</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 222.

<sup>93</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 222.

<sup>94</sup> In the Hebrew Bible a quasi identification of Zion and Sinai can be observed (Exod 19:1ff cf. Jdg 5:4-5). It is noteworthy nonetheless, that the Sibyl chooses Sinai over Zion.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 1.267, 5.352.

<sup>96</sup> Sir 24:23; 45:1-5; Tob 6:13; 7:13; 2 Esd 1:6, 12; 5:48; 7:6, 9; 8:3; 9:39; 2 Macc 1:29; 7:6, 30; 4 Macc 9.2; Bar 2:2, 28. Cf. Exod 24:12; Deut 4:1f, 4-6, 10, 13f, 40, 44f; 5:1, 31; 6:1, 11, 19 et al.

<sup>97</sup> Hesiod, Op. 117.

noble race of men of the past.<sup>98</sup> While in line 263, the fertility of the earth is limited to the people of God, it will become available to all mankind as the book progresses.<sup>99</sup> Abundant fertility is a common motif in descriptions of the Promised Land and the Golden Age.<sup>100</sup>

After the giving of the law, the Exodus narrative abruptly ends. There is no account of the taking of the land as one might expect in light of the biblical account. This shift in focus is really interesting. Whereas in the traditional Exodus narrative the taking of the land marks the end, the Sibyl has a different agenda. Her focus is on the law and on the people who are to adhere to it and enforce it, which in turn makes them guides for all mortals. The Sibyl then talks about the importance of the law and above all the importance of keeping it. This is followed by a brief history of the Babylonian exile which the Sibyl depicts as punishment for not keeping the law.

#### 4.6.2 Exile and restoration of the people of God (265-294)

265 ἀλλ' ἄρα καὶ τούτοις κακὸν ἔσσεται οὐδὲ φύγονται  
 266 λοιμόν. καὶ σὺ δὲ κάρτα, λιπὼν περικαλλέα σηκόν,  
 267 φεύξῃ, ἐπεὶ σοι μοῖρα λιπεῖν πέδον ἄγνόν ὑπάρχει.  
 268a ἀχθήσῃ δὲ πρὸς Ἀσσυρίους ...<sup>101</sup>  
 275b ... ὅτι φρεσὶν οὐκ ἐπίθησας  
 276 ἀθανάτοιο θεοῦ ἄγνῳ νόμῳ, ἀλλὰ πλανηθεῖς  
 277 εἰδώλοις ἐλάτρευσας ἀεικέσιν οὐδὲ φοβηθεῖς  
 278 ἀθάνατον γενετῆρα θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων  
 279 οὐκ ἔθελες τιμᾶν, θνητῶν εἶδωλα δ' ἐτίμας.  
 280 ἀνθ' ὧν ἑπτὰ χρόνων δεκάδας γῆ καρποδότειρα  
 281 ἔσσειτ' ἔρημος ἅπασα σέθεν καὶ θαύματα σηκοῦ.  
 282 ἀλλὰ μένει σ' ἀγαθοῖο τέλος<sup>102</sup> καὶ δόξα μεγίστη,  
 283 ὥς ἐπέκρανε θεός σοι ἄμβροτος. ἀλλὰ σὺ μίμνε  
 284 πιστεύων μέγαλοιο θεοῦ ἄγνοῖσι νόμοισιν,  
 285 ὁππότε σεῖο καμὸν ὀρθὸν γόνυ πρὸς φάος ἄρῃ.

But upon them also evil will be and they will not escape misery.  
 And you will surely flee, leaving the very beautiful shrine  
 since it is your fate to leave the holy ground,  
 you will be led to the Assyrians...  
 ...because in your heart you did not turn towards  
 the holy law of the immortal God, but you were led astray  
 and served shameful idols and you did not fear  
 the immortal begetter of all the gods and men.  
 Nor did you want to honour him but served the idols of mortals instead.  
 Therefore for seven decades of time all your fruitful earth

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Hesiod, Op. 109-126.

<sup>99</sup> Lines 619-23, and 744-50, see comments there.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Hesiod, Op. 117, 237; Gen 26:12; 1. En. 10:18-22; Mark 4:8 // Matt 13:8 // Luke 8:8.

<sup>101</sup> Lines 268b-275a will not be discussed in detail for reasons of scope.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 5.553; 9.411; 13.602.

and the wonders of the shrine will be desolate.  
 But a good end and the greatest glory await you,  
 as the immortal God will accomplish for you.  
 But you go on trusting the holy laws of the great God  
 when he will raise your tired knee to the light.

The passage starts out with introductory remark that even the people of God are not per se exempt from judgement and misery (λοιμός). The Sibyl's universal concern is underlined by this statement. The term λοιμός is used six times in the book and is often used in lists of various evils. So called catalogues of hardship form a literary genre in classical Greek and Hellenistic literature as well as in the Hebrew Bible. As elsewhere, the terms used in this section are combinations of LXX vocabulary (ἔρημος, προσοχθίζω, λατρεύειν) - pointing particularly to Deuteronomy and Jeremiah's prediction of 70 years of captivity (25:11) - and Homeric vocabulary.<sup>103</sup>

It is indicated that a new section starts in 266b as the Sibyl shifts to the second person singular, addressing the people personally. The section is comprised of a list of prophecies of doom in the second person singular. The change in person is probably a stylistic element that the Sibyl uses time and again to strengthen an argument.

In lines 266-267 it is said that the people will be forced to leave the temple and the holy ground (πέδον ἁγνόν). In the Old Testament Judea is referred to as the holy land.<sup>104</sup> However, since the Sibyl has shown no concern for the land so far (there was no account of the taking of the land) it is more likely that she uses 'holy ground' as a synonym for the temple itself. The Sibyl places great importance on the temple and was previously referring to the pious as living around the temple (line 213) - referring to it rather than the land as a whole is hence not improbable. Besides, the Sibyl uses γαῖα or γῆ to describe land or a land in particular. The Sibyl also says that it is the peoples' fate (μοῖρα) to leave the land and the temple. The term μοῖρα does not occur in the LXX or the NT. Throughout the book the law and the temple appear in tandem.

The people will be led away by the Assyrians (268). Since the destruction of the temple is spoken of in lines 274-275, we can assume that the Sibyl has the Babylonian exile in mind. She also equates the Assyrians with the Babylonians in lines 97-100 and 160 hence we can assume that Assyrians and Babylonians are interchangeable terms.

Other punishments that the Sibyl predicts in lines 268-275 are reminiscent of those in Deut 28:32-33, 41, 48-51 - awaiting those who do not obey the divine law. They will be scattered

<sup>103</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 222-223, cf. 232.

<sup>104</sup> Zech 2:16; Wis 12:3; 2 Macc 1:7.

over the entire earth (271)<sup>105</sup>, everybody will take offense at their customs (272)<sup>106</sup>, the land will be desolate (273a)<sup>107</sup>, the altar, the temple, and the city will be destroyed (273b-275a)<sup>108</sup>. 'The structure introduced by ἀνθ' ὧν (therefore) is b - a - b, where b is the threatened punishment and a is the accusation'<sup>109</sup>. This pattern recurs later in an oracle against Libya (324-327), followed by more future-tense predictions introduced by τοῦνεκα, which is a recurring pattern.<sup>110</sup>

The dispersion over the entire earth in line 271 is one of the common woes with regard to the exile and the expression 'every land and every sea' (πᾶσα δὲ γαῖα ... καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα) is one that the Sibyl often uses to describe the world at large; a merism.<sup>111</sup> However, as it is the nature of writings such as the Third Sibyl, it contains an allusion to both the writer's time and reader's time. By the Hellenistic age, the dispersion of the Jews had become one of the major claims of pagan authors writing about the Jews.<sup>112</sup> The dispersion holds an actuality for the Jews at the time of writing of the Third Sibyl 'for their country lay on one of the major fault-lines of the Hellenistic world, the boundary between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires, and was frequently the scene of violent disturbance. ... By the end of the 2nd century, if not before, Jewish settlements were to be found throughout the eastern half of the Mediterranean'<sup>113</sup>. This development continued in the Roman era and eventually the *pax Romana* helped the Jewish Diaspora flourish. The LXX uses the term Diaspora for the dispersion of Israel among the Gentiles and as divine punishment (Deut 28:25; Jer 41:17) until eventually God will gather his people in the land of Israel (Deut 30:4; Neh 1:9).<sup>114</sup> Within the context of the Hebrew Bible and LXX Diaspora means being robbed of one's homeland and being scattered among hostile nations. However, there is evidence that most Jews did not view it that way. Josephus, for instances, recasts the prophecy of dispersion in his own way to match the circumstances of his day.<sup>115</sup> Josephus too uses the expression 'every

<sup>105</sup> cf. Deut 28:64; Ezek 6:8; 12:15; 22:15.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Deut 28:37, 64-68; 3 Macc 3:4, 7, 16; 4 Macc 4:15-26.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Jer 4:7; 10:22; Ezek 6:6; 12:20; Amos 7:11, 17.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Deut 28:52; 2 Kgs 25:9; 2 Chron 36:19; Ezek 12:20.

<sup>109</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 223.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. lines 330-333, 493-495, 496-500, 500-503, 601, 604.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. 177, 659.

<sup>112</sup> For instance the famous example by Strabo quotes in Josephus, Ant. 14.115. Other examples are Cicero's note that Jews in Rome were ready to help Jews in Asia (Cicero, Flac. 28.66). Other examples for the dispersion of the Jews are Seneca, Sup. apud Augustus, Civ. 6.11; Arrian, Epict. diss. 2.9.19-20; Plutarch, Superst. 3.166 A and Josephus (C. Ap. 2.123, 282).

<sup>113</sup> Williams, 1998, 1.

<sup>114</sup> TDNT "διασπορά," 156.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Josephus, Ant. 4.115-16: '...and both all the earth, as well as the sea, shall be filled with your glory: and you shall be sufficiently numerous to supply the world in general, and every region of it in particular, with inhabitants out of your descendants. However, O blessed people! wonder that you are become so many from one

land and every sea' (πᾶσα ἡ γῆ καὶ θάλασσα) - a merism to describe the whole (inhabited) world. Josephus furthermore quotes Strabo, when he says that by the time Sulla crossed over to Greece to fight Mithridates and Lucullus had sent to deal with the unrest in Cyrene (c. 86 BCE), 'the whole inhabited world was full of our people' (τοῦ ἔθνους ἡμῶν ἡ οἰκουμένη πεπλήρωτο).<sup>116</sup> Similar statements are made by Philo in a speech put in the mouth of Agrippa I in front of Gaius (Caligula).<sup>117</sup> The Sibyl shares this positive attitude towards the Diaspora with Philo and Josephus although she does not use the term.

In line 277-278 the people are accused of idolatry and of not fearing God. Once again the verb *πλανάω* is used, this time in its passive form. It is said that they were led astray and served idols instead of turning to God and honouring his holy law (275-277). A *ὅτι* clause (line 275) contains the accusations the Sibyl makes against the people, what they have done (aorist and imperfect) to deserve this fate. The Sibyl then returns to her *ἀνθ' ὧν* pattern. Her structure is analogous to the sin-punishment pattern of oracles in the LXX. In the Hebrew Bible, as in the Third Sibyl, such oracles often threaten peoples collectively with destruction by a foreign enemy for failure to listen to God<sup>118</sup> while others address foreign nations directly.<sup>119</sup> Both forms occur repeatedly in the Sibyl. Lightfoot notes that 'her enumeration of sin of omission and commission in 275-279 is a pattern with biblical background'<sup>120</sup>. The use of causal conjunctions such as *ὅτι*, *ἀνθ' ὧν*, and *τοῦνεκα* is also common in the LXX. 'Book 3 offers exact specimen of judgement oracles [...] which replicate both literary form, content and context of the scriptural examples'<sup>121</sup>.

The reason for the exile and the other afflictions and catastrophes that come with it are given in lines 275b-279, namely unfaithfulness in God and his law. Again, the Sibyl's depiction of the people of God is all on the vertical line. It is said that the righteous were led astray (*πλανάω*). The same verb was used in line 227 to describe the result of the practice of astronomy and astrology. It is common deuteronomistic theology to blame the exile on the people and their deviation from the law. However, the Deuteronomists were mostly critical of kingship and blamed the exiles on the respective kings. In light of what the Sibyl said before about being led astray, the choice of the term *πλανάω* is not circumstantial. Being led astray

---

father: and truly, the land of Canaan can now hold you, as being yet comparatively few; but know that the whole world (οἰκουμένη) is proposed to be your place of habitation for ever.' (Thackeray, LCL).

<sup>116</sup> Josephus, Ant. 14.114-15 = GLAJJ I no. 105.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Philo, Legat. 281-2.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Deut 28:45-47; Jer 5:14-17.19.

<sup>119</sup> Amos 1-2; Ezek 25-32.

<sup>120</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 224.

<sup>121</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 224.

breaks the people's connection with God, it disturbs the vertical line. As a result divine punishment awaits them.

In line 278 the Sibyl calls God 'the immortal begetter of all gods and men' (ἄθάνατον γενετήρα θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων). This attribution is curious in more than one way. First of all, the choice of the term γενετήρ is noteworthy. Γενετήρ or γενέτης are not divine epithets in the LXX or the New Testament. Second of all, saying that God is the begetter of all gods is curious. One would not expect a Jewish text to explicitly acknowledge the existence of other Gods, especially not when idolatry has just been condemned two line earlier. However, being a pagan prophetess the Sibyl may be able to acknowledge the existence of other gods and yet deny their power. On the other hand, the remark could be polemic. Seen in light of the euhemeristic account of the Titanomachy, what the Sibyl is really saying is that God is the creator of all men and all so-called gods, i.e. all human kings who were then venerated as gods (cf lines 108-161 and comment). The statement that God is the begetter of all gods, however, puts the idol worshippers in their place. It is a relativisation, if not to say a rejection of their dominion altogether.

Lines 280-281 summarise the people's punishment once more; exile and destruction of the temple. The prediction that the exile would last 70 years could be inspired by Jer 25:11-12; 29:10.<sup>122</sup> Again, the ἀνθ' ὧν pattern is used. The worship of dead idols equals that of dead kings (i.e. the deified Titans) in line 546 in which the Greeks put their trust. The accusation of serving foreign Gods is similar to that in Jer 5:19.

In line 282 the Sibyl changes her tone once more. If the people heed the law and honour God, good outcome and glory await them. Once the pious have been punished and will obey the law of God again (284f), God will send a king from heaven who will rebuild the temple (290), which will be as it was before (294). Again, the special relationship of God and the people is described in terms of the reciprocal vertical line. By their very nature, relationships are reciprocal. This relationship stands and falls with the people reverence of the one God (via the temple) and their obedience to the law. The Sibyl is in line with later biblical tradition when she blames the exile on the people's backsliding. Unlike the Hebrew Bible, which describes history as the story of God and his people, the Sibyl allots the pious' history a place within universal history. Their place in history is on the horizontal line. It is their relation to God that constitutes the vertical line.

#### 4.6.3 God will send a king from heaven to avail his people (286-294)

286 καὶ τότε δὴ θεὸς οὐρανόθεν<sup>123</sup> πέμψει βασιλῆα,  
287 κρινεῖ δ' ἄνδρα ἕκαστον ἐν αἵματι καὶ πυρὸς ἀγῆ.

<sup>122</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 206.

<sup>123</sup> According to Buitenwerf (2003, 207) there is an error in Geffcken's edition in line 286: Geffcken, followed by Kurfēß, Nikiprowetzky, and Gauger, reads θεὸς οὐράνιος (the heavenly God) while the manuscripts and all previous editions read θεὸς οὐρανόθεν (God will send a king from heaven). I am following Buitenwerf's reading here. Geffcken may have taken offense at the idea that a pagan king could be from heaven, see commentary above.

288 ἔστι δέ τις φυλὴ βασιλῆιος, ἥς γένος ἔσται  
 289 ἄπταιστον· καὶ τοῦτο χρόνοις περιτελλομένοισιν  
 290 ἄρξει καὶ καινὸν σηκὸν θεοῦ ἄρξετ' ἐγείρειν.  
 291 καὶ πάντες Περσῶν βασιλεῖς ἐπικουρήσουσιν  
 292 χρυσὸν καὶ χαλκὸν τε πολύκμητόν τε σίδηρον.  
 293 αὐτὸς γὰρ δώσει θεὸς ἔννυχον ἄγνὸν ὄνειρον.  
 294 καὶ τότε δὴ ναὸς πάλιν ἔσσεται, ὥς πάρος ἦεν.

And then God will send a king from heaven  
 and he will judge each man in blood and beams of fire.  
 There is this royal tribe, whose race will never  
 stumble. And as the years roll by  
 this will reign and begin to erect the shrine of God anew.  
 And all the kings of the Persians will contribute  
 gold, bronze and much-wrought iron.  
 For God himself will give a holy dream at night.  
 And then the temple will be again as it was before.

The Sibyl stays on the vertical line. In line 286 it is said that God will then send a king from heaven to reverse the fortune of his people. However, οὐρανόθεν does not describe the nature of the king as being heavenly. Being an adverb, the word οὐρανόθεν describes an action, not a person. In this case, it circumstantiates the word πέμπω, i.e. from where will he (God) send what (a king); from heaven (οὐρανόθεν). The king is merely God's instrument. Instead of the king's nature, it describes the nature of God, who dwells in heaven and directs the events on earth from there. Hence God sends the king from where he resides, which is 'from heaven'. The intended reader is certainly aware that this refers to Cyrus of Persia. The idea that Cyrus, as a foreign king, is but an instrument of God is already expressed in Isaiah.<sup>124</sup> It should also be noted that foreign kings - in the LXX like in the Third Sibyl - whether good or evil, are usually regarded as directed by God in order to explain that nothing ever happens against his will but by his command. Hence the Babylonian exile has also been represented as God's punishment for the people's disobedience towards the law and not because the Babylonians chose to. It becomes more and more obvious that the law constitutes the vertical line. While disobedience to it leads to destruction, heeding the law brings about good fortune and God's benevolence. However, it also bears responsibility because the people of God are supposed to be moral guides for all people.

Some scholars maintain that the king that God will send from heaven is a reference to an eschatological king while Buitenwerf argues that it is an ex eventu prophecy about Cyrus.<sup>125</sup> Collins argues that the Sibyl has a messianic Cyrus in mind by comparing it to the oracle of

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Isa 44:24-45:8.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Collins, 1974, 38; Buitenwerf, 2003, 207.



Hystaspes. It is more plausible to read the prophecy against the backdrop of Isa 44-45. From the point of view of the Sibyl, the prophesied king is a future king - which makes the king an eschatological figure in the same sense as he is in Second Isaiah. The Sibyl made her prophecy long before Isaiah would. Since we are obviously dealing with an *ex eventu* prophecy we know that this king is no other than Cyrus.<sup>126</sup> However, the author's intention is to prove that the Sibyl is a true prophetess and the only way to achieve that is to show that her prophecies turn out to be true - which eventually of course they did.

The following lines predict the rebuilding of the temple (288-294). In lines 288-290 it is said that a certain royal tribe (i.e. the people of God) will rule and rebuild the temple. This probably refers to the certain amount of autonomy the Jews had during the Persian period. In line 291 it is said that the kings of the Persians will make provisions. This is a hint to the fact that the Sibyl is indeed talking about the return from the exile at the edict of Cyrus and, furthermore, it is the time of the Persian Empire that the Sibyl had prophesied earlier (cf. Lines 158b-161). In biblical and post-biblical accounts Cyrus and Darius are depicted as aiding the Jews financially with the restoration of the temple.<sup>127</sup> The horizontal and the vertical line meet where God intervenes and acts on behalf or against his people. The people's place on the chronological horizontal line is always related to their position on the vertical line. By allotting them a place in universal history, universal history in turn relies on the fate of the people of God. Only if they fulfil their role as guides in life for all mortals the nations can be saved.

#### 4.7 Conclusion

Scholars have often noted that the prediction in line 194-95, that the people of the Great God would be strong again and be guides in life for all mortals, holds a claim and hope for world dominion of the people of God. However, seen in light of lines 196-294 another aspect comes to the fore. In the beginning of the section, the pious were described as being ethically superior to all other peoples, especially to the Greeks and Romans whom the Sibyl condemns not only as warmongers but also because of a variety of immoral attitudes. She accuses them of sexual vices (pederasty, homosexuality and adultery in general) and of contemptuousness of God (arrogance, avarice and impiety). Over against this stand the pious people who received the law and are obliged to live according to it. However, in case they forsake the law, which eventually they would, they cannot escape judgement, either. The Sibyl draws on this

---

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Isa 44:24-45:5.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Ezra 7:11-26; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.59-63.

typical deuteronomistic pattern and summarises the account of the exile and the eventual return from it in an *ex eventu* prophecy. The structure by which the prediction is blocked in is that of sin - punishment, i.e. forsaking of the law (*Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang*). The Sibyl beseeches the pious to hold fast to God and his law - the underlying argument being that punishment awaits them again in case of forsaking and backsliding. In case of the latter they will be punished and destroyed along with the Greeks and Romans whom the Sibyl condemns because of their immoral quest for world dominion. Dominion, however, is God's alone. The earth was given to all in common wherefore the keeping of the law is crucial. By keeping the law the world is transformed into Utopia. By not keeping it and not believing in God the hubristic human kings started fighting over it. The Sibyl implies that the world will be a better place once all people follow the example of the people of God. In this respect lines 196-294 are the detailed explanation of line 194-195. Eventually, God will manifest his dominion on earth and the horizontal demarcation of space will be nullified. This will be the time when the people of God have fulfilled their role as moral guides for all mortals.

It is possible that the strong focus on the law actually represents an inner-Jewish debate. It is evident that the Third Sibyl is not really aimed at Gentiles, it just pretends to be. Just like in the Wisdom of Solomon the focus is on those Jews who obey the law and those who do not. The prophecies against and about the nations merely serve as an illustration to underline the point. We will get back to this point on lines 702-807.

It is a common trait of post-exilic and post-biblical prophetic writings to turn their prophecies against foreign nations rather than against Israel because Israel's punishment is believed to have come to pass via the exile and the destruction of the temple.<sup>128</sup> In the Diaspora setting, in which the Sibyl was native - more so than in the homeland - Jewish religion was constantly faced with the threat of assimilation. It is for that reason that the Sibyl reminds the Jews of their history and implicitly warns them that punishment will happen again if they were led astray. Writing before 70 CE she had no idea just how right she was. Since the author of the Third Sibyl writes from a Diaspora perspective, he does not look towards the restoration of Israel/Judea as a political entity. The temple and the land become abstract space with no specific location. The temple is a symbol for God's sovereignty. The kingdom of Solomon, on the other hand, was the ideal kingdom of the past. The Sibyl is not looking to the political independence of a Jewish state, she is looking to the establishment of the divine dominion on earth in which only the righteous will live. The manifestation of the divine dominion will transfer the world into an ideal utopian state. The law of Utopia will be

---

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Jdt 16:17.

its constitution. God's law is the safeguard for being a part of this Utopia. Weal and woe are therefore inseparably tied to the law. The claim to antiquity is always inherent in the Sibyl's prophecies. Being a relative of Noah, she was able to herald the giving of the law and the Babylonian exile long before Moses or Isaiah lived.

## 5 Section IV: Lines 295-349

### *Oracles against the nations*

#### 5.1 Introduction

Section IV (lines 295-336) of Sib. Or. 3 is one of the least structured parts of the book.<sup>1</sup> It is the beginning of a disparate collection of oracles against different nations running from line 295 to 544. It is also the section which contains the most questionable passage with regard to the dating of the Third Sibyl. Most scholars maintain that lines 350-380 were not part of the original book due to their complete lack of any distinct Jewish material. Collins separates this oracle from the rest of the book because 'the antithetical powers are Rome and Asia, whereas the rest of the book deals with internal Egyptian matters'<sup>2</sup>. Collins has not received much criticism for his comments. The supposed Egyptian origin of Sib. Or. 3 has become the hallmark of most studies dealing with the Third Sibyl. This view has recently been revised by R. Buitenwerf who disputes the Egyptian origin of Sib. Or. 3<sup>3</sup> and proposes that the book as a whole originated in Asia Minor.

According to most scholars, lines 400-488 are copies (or rather imitations) of pagan Sibylline Oracles.<sup>4</sup> This is based on Varro who states that these oracles stem from the Erythraean Sibyl.<sup>5</sup> Even so, not everything in this passage is out of tune with the rest of the book.<sup>6</sup> Lines 295-336 are connected with the history of the pious in lines 248-294 via the temple. While in lines 248-294 the destruction of the first temple was narrated and the blame was applied to people of God who failed to heed the law, lines 300-313, and 319-336 deal with the nations that were responsible for the assault on the temple. The latter lines deal with the Romans. It is probable that the oracle in 350-380 indeed stems from a non-Jewish source and was inserted here by a compiler because an oracle against Rome was already present. The oracle against Rome in lines 324-336 presupposes the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. The terminus a quo for the oracle in 350-380 probably points to the same date.<sup>7</sup> Rather than the oracles against Babylon or Rome, the oracle about the seventh king is out of place.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 209.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Collins, 1984, 358 cf. Collins, 2005, 86-8.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 124-136.

<sup>4</sup> Geffcken, 1902a, 13 attributes them to the Erythraean Sibyl which he derives from Lactantius who always refers to the Third Sibyl as the Erythraean Sibyl. Rather than that, a Jewish writer imitates the style of the famous Erythraean Sibyl (cf. Collins, 1974, 28).

<sup>5</sup> Varro apud Lactantius, Inst. 1.6.9. Cf. Collins, 2005, 87. I will not discuss these lines either as it is beyond the scope of this study and they shed little light on our topic.

<sup>6</sup> According to Collins, 2005, 86 there is nothing Jewish for 170 verses except for a prophecy against Gog and Magog in line 319.

<sup>7</sup> See also comment on lines 350-380.

<sup>8</sup> Contra Collins, 2005, 87-96.

## 5.2 Structure

295-299 Introduction of a new prophecy

300-313 Oracles against the Babylonians for destroying the temple

314-318 An oracle against Egypt

319-323 Gog and Magog, Libya

324-336 The daughters of the West

[336-349 Cities in Europe, Asia and Egypt will be destroyed]<sup>9</sup>

## 5.3 A formula to introduce a new section (295-299)

295 ἡνίκα δὴ μοι θυμὸς ἐπαύσατο ἔνθεον ὕμνον  
 296 καὶ λιτόμην γενετῆρα μέγαν παύσασθαι ἀνάγκης,  
 297 καὶ πάλι μοι μέγαλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσι  
 298 ἴστατο καὶ μ' ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ πᾶσαν  
 299 γαῖαν καὶ βασιλεῦσι τὰ τ' ἐσόμεν' ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖναι.

When my mind ceased the inspired hymn  
 and I prayed the great begetter to stop the distress,  
 again an oracle of the great God rose in my chest  
 And commanded me to prophecy over the entire earth  
 And to give in mind to kings what will be.

The section is separated from the previous one via an introduction formula that is almost identical to lines 162ff (see table and comment there). However, this introduction includes two additional lines, namely lines 295-296. At first we are told that the Sibyl ended the previous prophecy ('when my mind ceased the inspired hymn'). We can therefore assume that the prophecy in the previous section is presupposed by the author. We are also told that the Sibyl asked God to end the distress (ἀνάγκη). Nonetheless, the Sibyl is urged to prophesy again.

The actual prophecy begins with the introduction in line 300 (compare line 165). The formulae divide significantly different sections from other oracles - for instance the transition from historical to eschatological events.

## 5.4 Babylon is punished for destroying the temple (300-313)

300 καὶ μοι τοῦτο θεὸς πρῶτον νόῳ ἔνθετο λέξαι,  
 301 ὅσσα γέ τοι Βαβυλῶνι ἐμήσατο ἄλγεα λυγρὰ  
 302 ἀθάνατος, ὅτι οἱ ναὸν μέγαν ἐξαλάπαξεν.  
 303 αἰαῖ σοι, Βαβυλῶν ἡδ' Ἀσσυρίων γένος ἀνδρῶν,  
 304 πᾶσαν ἀμαρτωλῶν γαῖαν ῥοιζὸς ποθ' ἰκνεῖται  
 305 καὶ πᾶσαν χώραν μερόπων ἀλαλαγμὸς ὀλέσσει  
 306 καὶ πληγὴ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ, ἡγήτορος ὕμνων.

<sup>9</sup> Lines 336-349 will not be discussed in detail. Some references to the Anti-Macedonian oracles can be found in Section I.

307 ἀέριος<sup>10</sup> γάρ σοι, Βαβυλῶν, ἤξει ποτ' ἄνωθεν  
 308 αὐτὰρ ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν καταβήσεται ἐξ ἁγίων σοι  
 309 καὶ θυμοῦ τέκνοις αἰώνιος ἐξολόθρευσις.<sup>11</sup>  
 310 καὶ τότε ἔσθι, ὥς ἦσθα πρὸ τοῦ, ὥς μὴ γεγονυῖα·  
 311 καὶ τότε πλησθήσῃ ἀπὸ αἵματος, ὥς πάρος αὐτή  
 312 ἐξέχεας ἀνδρῶν τ' ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν τε δικαίων,  
 313 ὧν ἔτι καὶ νῦν αἶμα βοᾷ εἰς αἰθέρα μακρόν.

And first God put in my mind to say  
 how many baneful sufferings the immortal strove against Babylon  
 because it has destroyed the great temple.  
 Woe unto you, Babylon, and the race of Assyrian men,  
 upon the whole land of sinners a rush will come at a certain time  
 and tumult will destroy the whole land of mortals  
 and the blow of the Great God, leader of hymns.  
 The one living on air will come to you, Babylon, from above  
 From heaven he will descent out of his holy realm  
 The Eternal (will put) perdition upon the children  
 and then you will be, as you were before, as if you had never been  
 then you will be filled with blood, as earlier  
 you poured out that of good and righteous men  
 which is still now crying out to high heaven.

Line 300 is similar to line 165 (καὶ μοι τοῦτο θεὸς πρῶτον νόῳ ἐγγυάλιξεν). In line 165 πρῶτον (first) referred to the sequence of empires that would arise in a set order. Here, the resumption formula signifies that Babylon will be the first nation to be punished by God. The oracle is without a doubt *ex eventu*.

The oracle against Babylon/Assyria is the longest one in this section comprising eleven lines. It is aimed against Babylon/Assyria. The two are equated by the Sibyl as we have seen in line 268 and 160. The Sibyl starts her prophecy in a similar way to line 165-166. The two formulae are almost identical. However, whereas line 166 introduced a historical sequence of kingdoms until the advent of the Graeco-Macedonians and ultimately Rome, line 301 goes straight into the subject of judgement. Again, the horizontal line, i.e. the chronological progression of rule, is met with the vertical line via divine intervention. In line 166 the Sibyl introduced a sequence of empires that would reign relatively peacefully until the coming of the hubristic kings of Greece and Rome. All of that was perceived as a result of the division of the earth and the arrogance of the Titan kings, whom the Sibyl regards as the ancestors of the Greeks (and Romans). Now, however, she is not introducing a sequence of empires, she is

<sup>10</sup> Probably a divine epithet cf. frg. 3.17.

<sup>11</sup> Line 309 is an emendation by Geffcken. The manuscript reading καὶ θυμὸς τέκνοις αἰώνιος ἐξολοθρεύσει is corrupt. My translation follows that of Nikiprowetzky (1970, 307) and Buitenwerf (2003, 216) who read αἰώνιος as an epithet of God, as it often occurs in the Third Sibyl, and take it as the subject of the sentence. Granted that the sentence is still corrupt, in my opinion it is still the most convincing solution.

introducing their judgement. Their respective reigns have already been laid out in the list of empires in lines 159-161. The eastern kingdoms presented in lines 162-195 were portrayed in an unbiased way and contrasted with the hubristic Greeks and Romans. The unbiased kingdoms are that of Solomon, the Phoenicians, the Persians and several Anatolian nations. The Phoenicians and Persians usually received a positive assessment in the MT and both are associated with the temple. Solomon's chief builder of the first temple was Hiram of Tyre (Phoenicia) and Cyrus of Persia let the Israelites return from exile and rebuild the temple.<sup>12</sup> In line 162-195 the Sibyl mentioned no judgement for them. However, the Greeks and Romans are opposed to them. In the section at hand, the Sibyl announces judgement for Babylon for the destruction of the temple. It is noteworthy in this respect that in section II two kingdoms that partook in the building of the temple(s) were exempt from judgement.

The destruction of the temple in 587 BCE is given as the reason for Babylon's punishment. The Babylonians/Assyrians are punished for destroying the temple. In the previous section, the destruction of the temple by the Assyrians and the exile has been related (265-285) with regard to the people of God. There, the destruction of the temple was perceived as punishment for the people because they did not heed the law of God but went astray and served idols. Now the Sibyl turns to the Babylonians. In line 303 the Sibyl addresses Babylon in the second person in the biblical woe-formula style.

In lines 266-285 the Sibyl spoke to the pious men in the second person announcing exile (as punishment) and restoration. The destruction of the temple was among their punishments for disobeying the law (line 274-278). Here, the Sibyl addresses Babylon with the woe-formula αἰᾶ σοι (woe unto you). The Sibyl constructs the woe (αἰᾶ) with dative instead of genitive which would be the more obvious choice as it is more common.<sup>13</sup> The Sibyl uses this formulation 6 times total (303, 319, 323, 504, 508, 512). The construction occurs but a few times in the Bible.<sup>14</sup>

The intended equation of Babylon and Assyria is exhibited in line 303. The Sibyl heralds punishment for Babylon and the race (γένος) of Assyrian men. The formulation is reminiscent of line 219 where the Babylonians were described as a race of impious men (γένος δικαιοτάτων ἀνθρώπων). This indicates that the two entities are related, be it that Babylonians are descendants of the Assyrians, that the Assyrians are the inhabitants of Babylon or that they are one and the same. In line 160 she mentions them alongside each other which indicates that they are one and the same to her (Ἀσσυρία Βαβυλών). Either way, they are

<sup>12</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 5-10; Ezek 5:13ff.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 225.

<sup>14</sup> Num 21:29; Jer 48:46 (MT, verse not in LXX); Matt 11:21 = Luke 10:13.

entities from a distant past so that the equation of the two peoples may have developed into a common place. Their punishment will be the destruction of the whole land of sinners (γαῖα ἁμαρτωλῶν). Line 305 repeats the statement in other words, thus forming a parallelism.

Babylon's punishment is described as πληγή (306). The Sibyl uses it several times in this section and it can describe various disasters, either natural or military. In the LXX it is the word used to describe the plagues inflicted upon Pharaoh and translates the Hebrew נגף.<sup>15</sup>

Lines 307-308 form a parallelism saying that God will descend (καταβήσεται) from heaven (ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν) from his holy dwelling place or realm (ἐξ ἁγίων) to judge the Babylonians for the destruction of the temple.<sup>16</sup> The vertical line is stressed very vividly in these two lines: God is described as the one living on air (ἀέριος). His wrath will come upon the Babylonians from above (ποτ' ἄνωθεν). God's heavenly nature is stressed three times in these two verses: his wrath will come from above (ποτ' ἄνωθεν), it will come down (καταβήσεται) from heaven (ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν). We have already observed that God is imagined as living on high and delegating the events on earth from there. However, it has not yet been stated so explicitly. God's descent from his abode is also traditional imagery with regard to theophanies and judgement. Similar expressions to the one used here can often be found in classical Greek literature. It is commonly used in theophany texts.<sup>17</sup> In the Iliad, for instance, it is said, that Athena comes from heaven to aid Achilles.<sup>18</sup> In Hesiod's Theogony a similar expression is used for the sun.<sup>19</sup> Again, the Sibyl's indebtedness to biblical tradition and classical texts is exhibited.

Line 308 is particularly reminiscent of Isa 26:21 where it is said that God will bring forth anger from his holy (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου) upon the nations of the earth. In Mic 1:3 it is said that God will go out of his place to descend upon the high places<sup>20</sup> of the earth and judge the nations.<sup>21</sup> Both texts describe classical theophany scenes. In the Mic 1:3 the reference is with all probability to the temple. To go down (καταβαίνω) is a common expression used when referring to Jerusalem, which is in the mountains. In Isa 26 the reference is less clear because the LXX obscures the MT reading. While the LXX version of Mic 1:3 is rather literal, the LXX version of Isa 26:21 reads ἰδοὺ γὰρ κύριος ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου ἐπάγει τὴν ὀργὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (behold, the Lord will send wrath from his holy upon those that

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Exod 11:1; 12:3.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Macc 8:20; 15:8; Sir 46:17-18; Wis 18:14-19.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 1.208; 8.19-21, 365; 23.189; Od. 6.281; 20.31 where the gods are said to do something or come from οὐρανόθεν. See also: The Image of God.

<sup>18</sup> ἦλθε δ' Ἀθήνη οὐρανόθεν (Homer, Il. 1.194f).

<sup>19</sup> Ἥλιος φαέθων ἐπιδέρκεται ἀκτίνεσσιν οὐρανὸν εἰσανιών οὐδ' οὐρανόθεν καταβαίνων (cf. Hesiod, Theog. 760f).

<sup>20</sup> Places of worship.

<sup>21</sup> διότι ἰδοὺ κύριος ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτοῦ καὶ καταβήσεται καὶ ἐπιβήσεται ἐπὶ τὰ ὕψη τῆς γῆς.



dwell upon the earth) while the MT reading is identical to Mic 1:3<sup>22</sup>, in Isa 26:21 MT God is said to come out of his place to visit upon the people that dwell on the earth. In LXX reading the reference to God going out (יצא) is completely obliterated while in Mic 1:3 the LXX reads ἐκπορεύομαι. It is also curious that while in both texts the MT reads ‘from his place’ (ממקומו) Isa 26:21 renders ‘from his holy’ (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου). It is probable that in both MT texts God’s place refers either to the temple or a mountain. In the Sibyl’s version, God’s holy place refers to heaven rather than the temple. This is particularly evident from line 807, where God is designated as οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν. Besides, since the Babylonians destroyed the temple, God cannot be in it. By the time of the Second Temple God had already been transcended into heaven. God is furthermore characterised as the one living on high, or in the air (ἀέριος).<sup>23</sup> The choice of wording is noteworthy; in the Greek world ἀήρ was commonly regarded as the sphere of all kinds of spirits and demons and was differentiated from the αἰθήρ (ether, heaven). In fragment 3.17 of the Sibylline Oracles ἀέριος occurs in connection with αἰθέρα ναίων. The latter is more common to describe God as being on high and occurs in 2.27, 177; 3.11, 81; 5.298; 6.311; 12.132; 14.10 and frg. 2.17. In frg. 3.17 it occurs in a chain of other epithets (Imperishable, Creator, Eternal, the one who dwells on high). The expression αἰθέρι ναίων ‘adapts the Homeric and Hesiodic epithet of Zeus’<sup>24</sup>. In the Third Sibyl ἀέριος recurs only in one other instance namely in line 682 in reference to mountains. ἀέριος may be an unusual choice of vocabulary yet it becomes clear that it describes God in his celestial nature. That God is imagined as dwelling in heaven and acting from there has already been observed. In this passage, however it is explicitly stated that God will descent upon the Babylonians from heaven, his holy place of dwelling.

God coming from heaven, his holy, is in marked contrast to the temple, which traditionally is God’s earthly abode. After the exile God was slowly transcended into heaven. However, the notion that God lives in the temple also continued in some texts wherefore the temple is often referred to as a house.<sup>25</sup>

Just like in the Tower of Babel narrative, the destruction of the temple is the violation of the border between the human and the divine. The temple is essential to the vertical line. Its destruction is a direct offense against God. It is interesting that while in line 100 men wanted to go up (ἀναβαίνω) into heaven and were therefore punished by God, God now descends (καταβαίνω) from his holy realm to punish the Babylonians for destroying his earthly abode.

<sup>22</sup> כִּי הִנֵּה יְהוָה יֵצֵא מִמִּקְוֹמוֹ.

<sup>23</sup> It is grammatically possible that ἀέριος refers to ἐξολόθρευσις.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 537.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Isa 2:2 cf. Tob 14:4-6; Bar 3:24. See also comments on line 773-774.

The destruction of God's temple is a form of transgression of the border between human and divine.

The Babylonians will furthermore be punished for pouring out the blood of righteous and just men (ἀνδρῶν τ' ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν τε δικαίων) that still cries out to heaven (312-14). The expression ἀνδρῶν τ' ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν τε δικαίων in line 312 is reminiscent of line 219 (γένος ἐστὶ δικαιοτάτων ἀνθρώπων) where it describes the people of God. Again, the distinctiveness of the people of God from the other nations is not expressed by *ethnos* but by their superior moral qualities.<sup>26</sup> The combination of ἀγαθός and δίκαιος also occurs in line 233. Over against the righteousness and justice of the people of God stand the unrighteousness and injustice of the hubristic nations.<sup>27</sup> This notion is fairly unusual in antiquity but it is common in the MT and NT. The Sibyl uses the *Talionsstil*, she heralds that the Babylonians will be filled with blood according to how they have formerly spilled the blood of the righteous men.

The expression εἰς αἰθέρα μακρόν (into far heaven)<sup>28</sup> in line 313 is noteworthy. It's reminiscence to Gen 4:10 has often been noted<sup>29</sup>, but it is not identical to Gen 4:10 where God says that Abel's blood cries to God from the earth (πρὸς με ἐκ τῆς γῆς). In contrast to Genesis, the Sibyl highlights where the blood cries out rather than whence. The crying out of the blood into far heaven mirrors the statements in lines 307-8 where God is described as the one in heaven who descends upon the Babylonians to judge them. Whereas Genesis places the importance on the earth on which Abel was slain, the Sibyl stresses the fact that the bloodshed of God's people demands justice from God dwelling in heaven. The Sibyl, rather than using the biblical expression, stresses the fact that the blood cries out to high heaven, i.e. God's dwelling place (807). The Babylonians are not only punished because they destroyed the temple but also because they attacked his people. The people of God will be avenged for the injustice the Babylonians have done to them. The interpretation and justification of the downfall of the Babylonian empire as an act of God is a known feature in Jewish scripture.<sup>30</sup>

On the horizontal line, the oracle against Babylon starts a geographical progression that is pursued throughout the oracles in this section. From Babylon in the East<sup>31</sup>, the Sibyl moves to the North in an oracle against Gog and Magog (319-322), South against Libya (323), and

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.116, 214, 219-20, 233, 237, 257, 585, 720, 782-783 (ἀγαθός, δίκαιος).

<sup>27</sup> Sib. Or. 3.183, 362, 496, 498 (ἄδικος).

<sup>28</sup> The expression εἰς αἰθέρα is a common one in Greek literature (cf. Euripides, Bacc. 150; Xenocrates, Frg. 264.6; 265.7; Philo, Leg. 3.202; Mut. 1.179; Ios. 1.79; Mos. 2.285; Spec. 3.187; 4.115; Prob. 1.99). However, in combination with μάκρος the only other occurrence is to be found in Quintus of Smyrna, Posthomerica (7.256) from the fourth century CE (ἀργαλέως γοάσκειν ἐς αἰθέρα μακρὰ βοῶσα).

<sup>29</sup> Most recently by Hagedorn, 2011, 110f.

<sup>30</sup> Isa 13:1-14:23; 21; 47; Jer 27:11 (MT 51:11).

<sup>31</sup> Hagedorn, 2010, 111 locates Babylon in the North. However, that is only true when one looks at it from Palestine. From the Sibyl's point of view Babylon without a doubt lies in the East.

West against the daughters of the West (324ff). On the vertical line, Babylon will be punished for the destruction of the temple and the assault against God's people. To this end, God descends from heaven, his abode.

### 5.5 An oracle against Egypt in the seventh reign as a redactional addition (314-318)

314 ἥξει σοι πληγὴ μεγάλη, Αἴγυπτε, πρὸς οἴκους

...

318 ἑβδομάτῃ γενεῇ βασιλῶν, καὶ τότε παύση.

A heavy blow will come upon your houses, Egypt,

...

In seventh reign, and then you will have rest.

Egypt is addressed in lines 314-18<sup>32</sup>. It is also addressed in the second person. It is said that Egypt will receive a terrible blow (πληγὴ μεγάλη). The latter corresponds to line 305 and was probably borrowed from there.

Egypt will suffer from war and famine in the seventh generation of kings (ἑβδομάτῃ γενεῇ βασιλῶν). Again, the number seven is used to designate a certain period; it is a hallmark rather than the reference to a specific king or reign. After that period, Egypt will have rest. Blows will come upon Egypt in the seventh generation, and then it will have rest. Presumably this means that Egypt, unlike Rome, will not be utterly destroyed. The motif of punishment and restoration for Egypt also occurs in Isa 19 (especially 19:2) and Ezek 29:1-16.

The oracle concerning the seventh reign is reminiscent of lines 193 and 608 with which it shares the denominator 'seventh' (ἑβδομος). It seems likely that these oracles concerning Egypt were composed separately and were inserted into the book by a compiler. It is possible that they did originate in allusion to historical events in Egypt or even the Oracle of the Potter.<sup>33</sup> There is another similar prediction of doom for Egypt in lines 601-15. There it is also said that it will happen when the young seventh king of Egypt reigns. The denominator 'seven' suggests that the author is talking about the same period in both cases.

The number seven must be taken as a reference to a certain period that will bring about a revolution of things. It marks a period of a turn of events. 'Nothing in this particular passage gives any reason to evoke the era of Philometor and Euergetes'<sup>34</sup>, who have been the favourite identifications for the seventh king by scholars since Collins.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Lines 315-317 will not be discussed for reasons of scope.

<sup>33</sup> See comments on lines 608-23.

<sup>34</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 20.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Collins, 1974, 57-64; Cf. Gauger, 1998, 496.

The oracle against Egypt seems to be out of place. It disturbs the geographical sequence and omits the woe-saying.<sup>36</sup> In addition, it borrows some of its language from the oracle against Babylon (πληγὴ μεγάλη). Furthermore it is said the Egypt will have rest. No such thing was said of the other nations. All in all, the oracle is out of context. It is probable that it was inserted here at a later redactional stage to connect the woe-oracles with the predictions about the seventh king of Egypt. The oracle against Egypt is followed by one against Gog and Magog and Libya. Egypt and Libya were also mentioned together in line 208. Chances are the occurrence of Libya in line 322 inspired a compiler to add another oracle against Egypt here. What's more, Egypt has nothing to do with the destruction of the temple, while the other nations mentioned in this section, namely Babylon, Gog and Magog, and Rome can be linked to the destruction of the temple historically or traditionally. The original occurrence of the seventh reign or king, however, can be found in lines 608-623 where it shall be discussed in detail.

## 5.6 Oracles against Gog and Magog, Libya (319-323)

319 αἰαῖ σοι, χώρα Γὼγ ἡδὲ Μαγὼγ μέσον οὔσα

320a Αἰθιοπῶν ποταμῶν,...<sup>37</sup>

Woe unto you, land of Gog and Magog,  
That is between the Ethiopian rivers,

The traditions about Gog and Magog are 'understood in a bewildering variety of ways'<sup>38</sup> in Jewish and Christian literature. Normally, they function as an eschatological enemy.<sup>39</sup> They first occur in the table of the nations in Genesis 10:2 among the sons of Japheth. The story of Gog, the king of Magog, is told in detail in Ezek 38-39. In Ezek 38:8 Gog and Magog represent the mythical enemy from the North that will march against Israel at the end of days. In the Rev 20:7f Satan is said to deceive the nations Gog and Magog in the four corners of the earth (i.e. the whole world) and gather them together to wage war. In Rev 20:8 Gog and Magog is an apposition to 'the nations' and most likely a gloss that was inserted to form an allusion to Ezek 38-39 whence the tradition originally derives.<sup>40</sup> Ezekiel, on the other hand, describes Gog and Magog as the enemy from the north on Jer 6:22, which predicts the coming of a hostile nation from the ends of the earth (ἀπ' ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς).

However, whereas the Hebrew Bible depicts Gog and Magog as coming from the north, the Sibyl departs from the biblical tradition when she locates Babylon between the Ethiopian

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Hagedorn, 2011, 111.

<sup>37</sup> Lines 320b-323 are not discussed for reasons of scope.

<sup>38</sup> Aune, 1998a, 3:1094.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. 1QM XI 16; Rev 20:8; 3 En. 4:5.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Aune, 1998a, 3:1094.

rivers (320). In Ezek 38:5 Persians, Ethiopians and Libyans are mentioned among the allies of Magog which maybe the reason why the author locates Gog and Magog in Ethiopia.<sup>41</sup> Lines 162ff contain an oracle against Ethiopia. It is possible that the author identifies the two. The Sibyl's locating of Gog and Magog between the Ethiopian rivers may be here due to the mention of Cush in Ezek 38:5, which is usually, although not necessarily correctly, identified with Ethiopia.<sup>42</sup> The Ethiopian rivers could then again be those in the Garden of Eden.<sup>43</sup> The pair Ethiopian rivers also occurs in Zeph 3:10 and Isa 18:1 and most likely refers to the region alongside the rivers, i.e. Cush. Either way, Gog and Magog describe a remote, mythological location, the ends of the world. In Isaiah it appears in a sequence of oracles beginning in 14:28. The order in Isaiah is geographical (from a Palestinian standpoint): It has Philistia in the west (14:28-32), Moab in the east (15-16), Aram and Damascus in the north (17-18) and Cush (here: Nubia, not Ethiopia) in the south and finally Egypt (19).

It is possible that the Sibyl combines the allies of Gog mentioned in Ezek 38:5 and sums them up under the name Gog and Magog. In Ezek 38:5 Paras, Cush, and Put are mentioned - which the LXX renders as Persia, Ethiopians (Αἰθίοπες) and Libya (Λίβυες) - as the allies of Gog. In Josephus' version of the Table of Nations - where he updates the biblical names to those current in his own day - he names the Cushites (Χουσαῖοι) as Ethiopians and Put as the founder of Libya.<sup>44</sup> The Ethiopians refer to themselves and are widely known as Χουσαῖοι in Asia down to Josephus' time.<sup>45</sup> The identification of Put with Libya seems to be known outside biblical sources.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that the oracle against Gog and Magog is followed by one against Libya. The hostile nations are now North and South but they will be punished by God. The identification of Cush with Ethiopia and Put with Libya has probably already been an established tradition in Hellenistic Judaism by the time of the Third Sibyl. In Greek literature Libya, the Greek word for Africa, is a geographical term for the continent of Africa when it occurs in the context of the tripartite division of the inhabited world.<sup>47</sup> However, the Sibyl does not elaborate on Libya's fate. Libya has also already been mentioned in line 208. In line 208, Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya also appear as a group which may have inspired the author to insert the additional oracle against Egypt at this point (314-

<sup>41</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 217.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Isa 18; Zeph 3:10.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Gen 2:13.

<sup>44</sup> Josephus, Ant. 1.131-132.

<sup>45</sup> Cush is regarded as a province of Arabia in Asia by Targum Neofiti and the Jerusalem Targum. Cf. Mason, 2000, 47 n. 357.

<sup>46</sup> The name Phut appears in Coptic in the form of Phaiat as the place between the Canopic arm of the Nile River and the Libyan mountains. Mason, 2000, 47 n. 361.

<sup>47</sup> Herodotus, Hist. 4.191.1-3. 4.42; Hecataeus of Milet, FGH 1, F 257, 346; Polybius, Hist. 3.37. cf. Herodotus, Hist. 2.16.1; 3.96; 115; 4.41; Xenophon, Mem. 2.1.10; on the three continents and their boundaries see Strabo, Geogr. 1.4.7-8; 2.5.26; Arrian, Anab. 3.30.7-9.

318). Libya and Ethiopia can also be taken as references to the continent of Africa/Libya. In either instance the Sibyl does not elaborate on the fate of Libya which indicates that she had no exact knowledge of it. Rather than that, Libya represents an exotic corner of the earth in the south. The inclusion of Ethiopia and Libya into the Sibyl's prophecies points to the tripartite division of the earth and the existence of three continents. While her focus is on Asia and Europe and their opposition (via the enemies Greece and Rome), she points to the existence of a third continent (Africa) which is a commonplace in Greek literature of that time.<sup>48</sup>

The idea put forward by Aune that Gog and Magog are a cipher for the Ethiopians and/or Nubians that accompanied Antiochus IV to capture the temple in Jerusalem is not convincing.<sup>49</sup> Rather, the destruction of the temple, which is mentioned in line 328, refers to the 'daughters of the west' in line 324 and not to the Ethiopians or Libyans in the passage at hand.

As we have it, Gog and Magog occupy a position that is little analogous to that in the MT and Jewish tradition. Their placement in Ethiopia, however, hints to their remote and exotic location. In the Graeco-Roman world, Ethiopia was the southernmost corner of the earth that no traveller had ventured beyond. It may be for that reason that the Sibyl associates this mythical enemy with the corners of the inhabited earth.<sup>50</sup>

The oracles against Gog and Magog are *ex eventu* prophecies. By putting the oracle against Gog and Magog in the mouth of the Sibyl, the author is able to make her announce the destruction of Gog and Magog long before Ezekiel would. Again, the Sibyl's claim to antiquity comes to the fore. By drawing from biblical prophecies and the style of the LXX she is able to set her oracles in a time before those of the biblical prophecies. Unlike the oracle against Babylon, the Sibyl does not give a reason for the judgement of Gog and Magog. She does not need to because Gog and Magog is a traditional enemy and her readers would have understood the reference.

---

<sup>48</sup> By the fifth century, the inhabited world was divided into three parts. Herodotus was already able to distinguish Africa/Libya from Asia as the third continent by at least 500 BCE. Cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.16.1; 3.96; 115; 4.41; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.10; on the three continents and their boundaries see Strabo, *Geogr.* 1.4.7-8; 2.5.26; Arrian, *Anab.* 3.30.7-9.

<sup>49</sup> Contra Aune, 1998a, 3:1094.

<sup>50</sup> Another oracle against Gog can be found in line 512 among various oracles against the nations. The Sibyl once again uses the woe-formula αἰῶ σοι to address Gog. The expression καὶ πᾶσιν ἐφεξῆς ἅμα Μαγῶγ (and without exception all of Magog) signifies that the Sibyl has Magog not as one nation in mind but as an assembly of many nations as the MT predetermines it. The nations mentioned alongside Gog - namely the Marsians and the Darcians - point to the traditional ends of the earth.

Various emendations have been proposed for μαρσῶν ἢ δ' ἄγγων (or δαγῶν in Ψ) in line 513. Buitenwerf (2003, 250) supposes to read Marsi, a tribe living in Latium and Dahae, a Scythian tribe east of the Caspian sea. Even though he acknowledges that these readings are speculative, he claims they can be taken to represent the extremes of the world.

### 5.7 The daughters of the west (324-333)

324 θυγατέρες δυσμῶν, ὥς ἤξετε πικρὸν ἐς ἡμᾶρ.  
 325 ἤξετε καὶ χαλεποῖο διωκόμεναι ὑπ' ἀγῶνος,  
 326 δεινοῦ καὶ χαλεποῦ· δεινὴ κρίσις ἔσσεται αὐτίς,  
 327 καὶ κατ' ἀνάγκην πάντες ἐλεύσεσθ' εἰς < τὸν > ὄλεθρον,  
 328 ἀνθ' ὧν ἀθανάτοιο μέγαν διεδηλήσασθε  
 329 οἶκον ὁδοῦσι σιδηρείοις τ' ἐμασήσατε δεινῶς.  
 330 τοῦνεκα δὴ νεκρῶν πλήρη σὴν γαῖαν ἐπόψει,  
 331 τοὺς μὲν ὑπὸ πτολέμου καὶ πάσης δαίμονος ὀρμῆς,  
 332 λιμοῦ καὶ λοιμοῦ, ὑπὸ τ' ἐχθρῶν βαρβαροθύμων.  
 333 γαῖα δ' ἔρημος ἅπασα σέθεν καὶ ἔρημα πόλεις.

daughters of the west, how you will come to a bitter day,  
 indeed come pursued by hard struggle,  
 dreadful and hard, a terrible judgment will there be.  
 And therefore you will all head to perdition  
 because you tore the great temple of the immortal to pieces  
 and gnawed it terribly with iron teeth.  
 Therefore you will see your land full of corpses  
 some (killed) by war and others by all kinds of evil spirits,  
 some by famine and pestilence, others by barbarous-minded enemies.  
 Your entire land will be desolate and your cities deserted.

In line 324 the 'daughters of the west' (θυγατέρες δυσμῶν) are addressed. The prophecy concerning the daughters of the west reconnects the oracle with universal history and with line 175 in particular where Rome is described as coming from the western sea. That Rome is again envisaged as coming from the west is hence not surprising. The Romans regarded themselves as superior to the east by nature. Strabo stresses the political connotations of Roman rule over (almost) the whole inhabited world. He attributes Rome, having a temperate climate and being in the middle of the largest peoples between Greece and the best parts of Asia.<sup>51</sup> Cleopatra's campaign against Rome was likewise presented as a world conflict between east and west not only by the Roman poets Virgil<sup>52</sup> and Florus<sup>53</sup> but most significantly by Philo<sup>54</sup>. The Sibyl picks up on these propagandistic claims and turns them around.<sup>55</sup>

Via the destruction of the temple, the oracle is connected to the history of the people of God and the oracle against Babylon in lines 303-313 in particular. The oracle omits the woe saying which suggests that it was added at a later stage.<sup>56</sup> Chances are the original oracle

<sup>51</sup> Strabo, Geogr. 1.1.16.

<sup>52</sup> Virgil, Aen. 8.685f.

<sup>53</sup> Florus, 2.21.

<sup>54</sup> Philo, Legat. 144.

<sup>55</sup> See also excursus on lines 350-380 in the introduction section.

<sup>56</sup> It is unlikely that "daughters of the west" refers to Libya which is evidently not in the west wherefore it disturbs the text.

against Libya consisted of lines 323 and 334-336 until it was interpolated by the oracle concerning the daughters of the west in lines 324-333. The 'west' is probably borrowed from line 334 where the appearance of a comet in the west is a harbinger of calamities. The ἀνθ' ὧν structure is in line with the rest of the section while the reference to the temple connects the oracle with that against Babylon in lines 303-313.

The plural 'daughters' in line 324 is noteworthy as one would expect the Sibyl to speak of just one daughter, namely Rome. In line 445 the term 'daughter' is used for Rhodes. The Hebrew Bible frequently refers to the 'daughter Zion'.<sup>57</sup> Cities are traditionally feminine. We can therefore conclude that the term 'daughter' is a metaphor for a state or a city. Since Sib. Or. 3.329 uses the plural it is fair to assume that the author refers to more than one nation. From what we have learned about the west so far, that would be the Hellenistic states and the Roman Empire. In light of the predictions about Gog and Magog it is also possible to argue that the daughters of the west will be among the allies of Gog and Magog. On the other hand, Rome is described as 'many-headed' in line 176 which could be a reference to the senate or the Triumvirate. In that case, the plural could be picking up on the image of Rome as many-headed. Either way, Rome is the most likely candidate for the 'daughters of the west'.

The daughters of the west are accused of having torn down the temple of the Immortal. Babylon/Assyria was accused of the same sin. The ἀνθ' ὧν structure is used again. The only other nation besides the Babylonians to have destroyed the temple was the Romans in 70 CE. However, if the author indeed refers to the Jewish War, Sib. Or. 3 in its present state must have been compiled some time after the Roman conquest of Jerusalem. Buitenwerf suggests taking this line as an eschatological reference<sup>58</sup> like the one in lines 665-66 and 688 where the nations are being punished for the attempted (!) destruction of the temple. However, the daughters of the west will definitely destroy the temple and not fail in the attempt. The notion that a nation will successfully destroy the temple at the end of days is unparalleled in Judeo-Christian literature before 70 CE.<sup>59</sup> It is also curious that the author does not mention this event anywhere else in the book. It is therefore likely that this is a rather late addition to the text, probably the latest<sup>60</sup>, complimented under the impression of the factual destruction of the temple in 70 CE. In light of the prophecy against Babylon in lines 300-15 the author has the

<sup>57</sup> Isa 1:8; 37:22; 47:1; Jer 46:24 (MT 26:24).

<sup>58</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 219.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Mark 13 where a prophecy about the destruction of the temple is put in the mouth of Jesus. This prophecy is either *ex eventu* or stems from an individual or a group that wanted to eradicate the temple because in their opinion it was not administered in the correct way (cf. Cf. 11Q19-20; 4Q544).

<sup>60</sup> It is possibly that the anti-Roman oracle in lines 350-380 belongs to the same redactional stage.



Sibyl predict the downfall of Rome that he so longs for. The Babylonians destroyed the temple but they were punished, so will the Romans, he hopes.

The *Talionsstil* is used once more. The reason for the punishment of the 'daughters of the west' in line 328 is framed by predictions of their judgement. Lines 324-327 announce general judgement and hard times, line 328-29 state the reason for this terrible fate (ἀνθ' ὧν), and lines 330 elaborate on the nature of the daughters' doom which is introduced by τοῦνεκα (therefore). The sequence is: prediction of judgement → reason for judgement (because...) → punishment as a result (therefore...).

The expression 'gnawed it terribly with iron teeth' (ὀδοῦσι σιδηρεῖοις τ' ἐμασήσατε δεινῶς) in line 329 resembles that in Dan 7:7 and 19 where it describes the features of the fourth beast.<sup>61</sup> In Daniel, the fourth beast refers to the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Dan 7 is essentially anti-Hellenistic oracular opposition under the experience of the events during the reign of Antiochus IV.<sup>62</sup> However, in later Jewish and Christian literature the fourth beast of Daniel is commonly taken as a reference to Rome.<sup>63</sup> Supposed the author knew Daniel, Sib. Or. 3 would be another example projecting the prophecies of Daniel on Rome. The combination of words ὀδοῦσι σιδηρεῖοις (Sib. Or. 3 329) or ὀδόντας σιδηροῦς (Dan 7:7) seems to be unique in contemporary literature. It is therefore likely that the compiler of Sib. Or. 3 knew the book of Daniel, in one form or another, and intentionally drew from it. The recurring theme in this section is the destruction of the temple. In an ex eventu prophecy the Sibyl first heralds the downfall of the Babylonians for the destruction of the temple and than that of the Romans for the same crime. In the previous section, she focussed on the history of the people of God and sought an apology for the exile according to the deuteronomistic pattern. She also announced the rebuilding of the temple thanks to Cyrus.

Lines 330-33 describe the punishment that will come upon the daughters of the west. The passage is connected to the preceding lines via τοῦνεκα and is still set in the second person singular. Many will be killed, either by famine and pestilence or by their enemies. Their land and their cities will be desolate. War and famine are the usual signs for judgement that occur many times throughout the book. Again, the announced punishments are reminiscent of similar ones given by biblical prophets first against Israel and later against the nations. The Sibyl also prophesied war and destruction for the people of God because they did not observe

<sup>61</sup> ἔχον ὀδόντας σιδηροῦς μεγάλους, ἐσθίον καὶ κοπανίζον (Dan 7:7 LXX).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Collins, 1993, 323.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. 4Q552-3; Rev 13; 4 Ezra 13.2. Cf. Aune, 1998, 2:734ff.

the law and now turns those prophecies against the nations. It is a pattern that is drawn from biblical prophecy and owed to its development during and after the exile.<sup>64</sup>

The second person has been used for the other oracles against the nations, starting with the people of God, then Babylon, Egypt and now Rome and is also common in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>65</sup> The desolation of the land in line 333 is one of the common images that the Sibyl draws from.<sup>66</sup> The predication that the land will be deserted and desolate invokes the prophecies about the Babylonian exile rather than an oracle against a foreign nation.<sup>67</sup> However, in later prophecies the motif is often turned against the foreign nations rather than Israel. In Isa 47:2, for instance, the virgin daughter Babel is to flee the land.

#### **Excursus: The Sibyl and the use of biblical style**

Lines 300-330 contain oracles of doom against various nations. Next to the Sibyl's assessment of the individual nations the passage also sheds light on her usage of the Septuagint and her geographical perspective.

With her oracles against the various nations in this section, the Sibyl progresses geographically from East to West (Babylon, [Egypt], Libya, and Rome). The east-west progression is on the horizontal line. We have already seen a similar east-west progression in lines 162-191. Her progression is also in line with the chronological order of the kingdoms given in lines 160-161 which is also on the horizontal line.

Gauger argues, however, that the oracles display no geographical or other pattern. Rather than that, the oracles are supposed to impress the reader by the abundance of the nations in them and the vastness of their geographical horizon.<sup>68</sup> He points to 1 Macc 15:22f for a similar apparently random culmination of geographical references. However, I doubt that the oracles are random.

Some of the images used in lines 303-13 are particularly reminiscent of the anti-Babylonian oracles in Isaiah,<sup>69</sup> even though they are not mere copies of biblical writings.<sup>70</sup> Woe-oracles are familiar from the MT and LXX. However, the Sibyl substitutes the biblical οὐαῖ (woe) that the LXX uses with the common Greek αἰαῖ while she maintains the unusual construction of αἰαῖ plus dative instead of genitive.<sup>71</sup> Woe-sayings concerning sinful cities, peoples, and nations, both Jewish and Gentile, are also a common feature of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>72</sup> Lightfoot suggests that the Sibyl 'is trying to recreate an ethos of prophecy - as interpreted in Hellenistic Judaism - in a similar way to Enoch, and to other Hellenistic Jewish authors who try to summon up the ethos of a particular kind of writing'<sup>73</sup>. While Buitenwerf notes that the author exhibits no literary dependency on biblical material and might as well be paraphrasing from memory<sup>74</sup>, Lightfoot argues that this distance has no bearing on whether or not he had access to biblical texts but that the 'material has been recast into the style felt appropriate to a

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 60.

<sup>65</sup> Esp. Nahum who addresses Niniveh in the second person throughout the book cf. Nah 1:11ff.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Lines 280-81.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Isa 1:7; 5:9; 6:11; 64:10; Jer 4:27, 27; 41:22, 51:2 but also of other nations cf. Isa 61:4; Jer 10:25; 26:19.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Gauger, 1998, 423.

<sup>69</sup> Sib. Or. 3.303-4 cf. Isa 13:9-11; 308 cf. 26:21.

<sup>70</sup> Contra Buitenwerf, 2003, 209, 326-29.

<sup>71</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 225.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 13:30; Isa 1:4, 24; 5:8, 11, 18, 20-22; 10:1, 5; 17:12; 18:1; 28:1; 29:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1; 45:9-10; 55:1; Jer 22:13, 18; 23:1; 30:7; 34:5; 47:6; 48:1; 50:27; Ezek 13:3, 18; 34:2; Amos 5:18; 6:1; Mic 2:1; Nah 3:1; Hab 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19; Zeph 2:5; 3:1; Zech 2:10-11; 11:17.

<sup>73</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 220.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 326.

Sibylline oracle<sup>75</sup>, i.e. oracular syntax - a pagan style that he is trying to imitate, not so unlike the way Josephus is transposing biblical material to the style of a Greek historian. We can therefore conclude that the allusions and reminiscences to biblical narratives and prophecies are by no means random; instead they are intentionally recast in the author's own way. We have already seen<sup>76</sup> and we will again that he also exhibits similarities and common traits to other works, such as Jubilees, Wisdom of Solomon, or Hesiod which may reflect established common traditions or even knowledge of the book. The Sibyl draws from biblical and classical material alike. Her wide range of knowledge of different texts and places fits her image of a wanderer. The repeated usage of the oracular 'when-then' style is an exhibition of the author's endeavour to adopt the Sibylline technique while recasting biblical material. Rather than replica, the Sibyl's oracles are 'Greek-language analogues of biblical oracles of judgement and punishment'<sup>77</sup>.

The Sibyl shows a tendency to direct her woe-oracles against foreign nations rather than the Jews.<sup>78</sup> She does have an oracle against the people of God but it culminates in an eschatological hope for restoration (282-85). This derives from her Diaspora situation and the political situation from which her oracles originated. It is the result of reading biblical prophets in a different light.<sup>79</sup>

The Sibyl's woe oracles follow the biblical pattern of sin and punishment in the *Talionsstil* ('you have done x; so x will be done to you').<sup>80</sup> The punishment of Babylon in lines 311-13 is a fine example of the *Talionsstil* ('Babylon shall be filled with the blood she has spilled'). These woe-sayings usually appear in strings of three or more (303-323; 492-513). Rather than mere antagonism the Sibyl relates the fate of the nations to that of the people of God. While lines 300-330 indeed show no mercy for the nations, the Sibyl's tone changes in lines 545-572 and 624-651 where she admonishes the nations to turn to God and his law so that they may be saved from his judgement. This attitude reflects the later prophets rather than the strict antagonism of Deuteronomy.<sup>81</sup>

## 5.8 A comet as a harbinger of judgement in reference to Caesar (334-336)

334 ἐν δὲ δύσει ἀστὴρ λάμψει, ὃν ἐροῦσι κομήτην,  
335 ῥομφαίας λιμοῦ θανάτοιό τε σῆμα βροτοῖσιν,  
336 ἡγεμόνων τε φθορὰν ἀνδρῶν μεγάλων τ' ἐπισήμων.

But in the West a star will shine, which they will call comet,  
it will be a sign of sword, famine and death for mortals,  
and it will be perdition for leaders and significant men.

The oracle in lines 334-336 has no grammatical connection to the previous one. It is possible that it originally followed the oracle against Libya in line 324 until the prediction about the daughters of the west was inserted. As we now have it, it refers to Rome whose end will be heralded by the appearance of a star in the west, which they call 'comet'. Comets were usually considered as harbingers of bad fortune in Graeco-Roman antiquity.<sup>82</sup> The lasting

<sup>75</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 222.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Lines 108-158a and comments there.

<sup>77</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 222.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 226.

<sup>79</sup> The idea is that punishment for idolatry and the like which the prophets had heralded has already taken place in form of the destruction of the first temple and the exile - which are precisely the events that the Sibyl announces as punishment for the Jews' disobedience to the law. In post-exilic times woe-oracles were more and more addressed at foreign nations and foreign rulers respectively - implicitly with the hope for the return of native kingship.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 225.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Deut 32:43; 33:29. See also comments on lines 702ff and 767ff.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Clauss, 1999, 57.

impression of the Roman associations of pagan Sibylline Oracles around the turn of the era is recorded by Tibullus<sup>83</sup>: '[The Sibyls] told that a comet should appear, the evil sign of war, and how that thick on earth should fall the stony shower. And they say that trumpets and the clash of arms were heard in heaven, and sacred groves rang with the coming rout.'<sup>84</sup> It is very likely that the appearance of a comet in the west is a motif drawn from one of the original Roman Sibyls.

When a comet appeared in 44 BCE during Caesar's funeral games a positive connotation had to be found.<sup>85</sup> The interpretation of a comet as a harbinger of good signs was a commonplace in the east where it heralded the new golden age under the rule of the new god whose coming it signified.<sup>86</sup> The motif of such astral phenomena is influenced by pagan oracles.<sup>87</sup> According to Justin a comet appeared to signal the birth of Mithridates.<sup>88</sup> The Bahman Yasht - part of the Avesta which is the bible of Zoroastrianism - predicts just that sign, which is reminiscent of star of Bethlehem in the nativity story in Matt 2:1.<sup>89</sup> As a harbinger of good tidings, the appearance of a star is important in the nativity story of Jesus because the star of Bethlehem signals the birth of son of God.

Caesar, however, was not a new god; he was already the national god. If the comet was to signify the coming of a new god it had to be Octavian.<sup>90</sup> Later authors say that initially Octavian was convinced that the star had risen for him but was successfully persuaded to relate it to his late father<sup>91</sup> and apparently he accepted this interpretation.<sup>92</sup> In 44 BCE he erected a statue to Caesar with a golden star above his head.<sup>93</sup> Soon all statues of Caesar would bear that symbol.<sup>94</sup> Chances are the Sibyl knew of this well-known event during Caesar's funeral games and picked up on it to turn it against Caesar making him the harbinger of war and destruction. The reference is certainly open to interpretation but Caesar seems to be a likely candidate. The Sibyl's image of God contains critique of the imperial cult.<sup>95</sup> Supposed the oracle against Rome beginning in line 324 presupposes the destruction of the Second Temple, the oracle may also refer to Vespasian or Titus. The matter cannot be

---

<sup>83</sup> Collins, 1997, 183.

<sup>84</sup> Tibullus, *Elegies*, 5.2.71-80 (Postgate, LCL).

<sup>85</sup> For discussion and sources see: see Ramsey/Licht, 1997.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Weinstock, 1971, 371.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Berger, 1980, 1428-1469. Cf. Cicero, *Nat. d.* 2.5.14 (cometas... cincinnatas); Lucan, 1.529 (mutantem regna cometen); Lactantius, *Inst.* 7.16.8 (crines cometarum).

<sup>88</sup> Justin, *Trog.* 1.37.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Eddy, 1961, 179.

<sup>90</sup> Clauss, 1999, 57.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 2.23.94.

<sup>92</sup> Clauss, 1999, 58. Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 2.23.94; Suetonius, *Aug.* 88.

<sup>93</sup> Cassius Dio, *Hist.* 45.7.1.

<sup>94</sup> Clauss, 1999, 58.

<sup>95</sup> See Part III: The Image of God.

resolved with certainty. However, it is clear that the Sibyl is picking up on a commonplace. What the Roman authors interpreted as a good sign is a harbinger of destruction in the Third Sibyl. The comet in the west does not signify the coming of a ruler god but that of the hubristic Romans which would subdue the Mediterranean and grind the house of God with iron teeth. Even though the people of God do not take interest in celestial signs (lines 227-8) the Sibyl makes use of this widespread phenomenon in the Graeco-Roman world.

The oracle against the daughters of the west and the announcement of a comet in the west illustrate the horizontal line. The oracle reflects the perception of ancient geography according to which the inhabited world was aligned to the east rather than the north. Furthermore, it is a reversal of Graeco-Roman propaganda. The section illustrates that those who sacked the temple cannot escape divine judgement.

The predictions against the daughters of the west are followed by oracles against Asia and Europe (337-347) as well as Egypt (348-349). The section is structured by the phrases ἐν Ἀσιᾷ μὲν in line 342 and Εὐρώπῃς δὲ in line 346. The Sibyl heralds that many cities in Asia and Europe will be destroyed when the river Tanais, the traditional border between Asia and Europe<sup>96</sup>, will leave Lake Maeotis, which is a reference to the Black Sea deluge.<sup>97</sup> The oracles against cities in Asia and Europe exhibit further geographical knowledge of the Sibyl and connect her with the Sibyl local to Asia Minor.<sup>98</sup> Some of the places are known for their Jewish (and later Christian) communities<sup>99</sup> while other can not be identified at all.<sup>100</sup> The oracle against Egypt in lines 348-349 connects the section with the rest of the book. Lines 367-380 predict blissful times for both Asia and Europe. Some of the predictions foreshadow the features of the divine dominion.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>96</sup> In Jubilees and Josephus' version of the Table of Nations, the Tina River is used as boundary between Asia and Europe (Ant. 1.122; Jub. 8.12, 16. 28; 9:8; Strabo, Geogr. 1.4). Tanais is the ancient Greek name for the river Don. Tanais appears in ancient Greek sources as the name of the river and of a city on it, situated in the Maeotian marshes (Herodotus Hist. 4.20-21, Strabo, Geogr. 1.4, 7.1).

<sup>97</sup> Lake Maeotis is equivalent to the Sea of Me'at in Jub. 8:27; 9:8. The Tanais River is again equivalent to the Tina river in Jub. 8:12.16; 9:8. Curiously enough, the account of the Sibyl states that Tanais will leave Lake Maeotis while the account in Jubilees claims that Tina runs into the sea of Me'at (Jub. 8:12). Apparently, the same geography is presupposed by Sib. Or. 3 and Jub (Scott, 1995, 37 n. 163). The Lake of Maeotis is nowadays known as the Sea of Azov, a small shallow sea which is linked to the Black Sea on the South. The Black Sea deluge theory dates the genesis of the Sea of Azov to 5600 BC. It is probable that the author of the Third Sibyl presupposes Tanais as border between Asia and Europe because in lines 339ff he lists cities in Asia and Europe which will be destroyed by a flood. For further reading on the subject see Yanko-Hombach, 2007.

<sup>98</sup> The places listed are: (in Asia) Iassus, Cebren, Pandonia, Colophon, Ephesus, Nicaea, Antioch, Tanagra, Sinope, Smyrna, Gaza, Hierapolis, Astypalea, (in Europe) Cyagra, Meropeia, Antigone, Magnesia, and Mycenae. See also comments on 350ff and 808ff.

<sup>99</sup> Ephesus (Acts 18:19ff), Smyrna (Rev 1:11; 2:8) and Antioch (Acts 13:14ff).

<sup>100</sup> Cyagra, Meiropeia and Maros are unidentified.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. lines 767ff.

## 5.9 Conclusion: the four corners of the Earth

In her oracles against the nations the Sibyl envisages the four corners of the earth: Gog and Magog in the North, Libya/Ethiopia in the South, Babylon in the East, and Rome in the West. Here, she can be seen as partaking in the shared geographical knowledge of the Graeco-Roman world. The oracle against Rome was composed inserted into the oracle against Libya under the impression of the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. The oracle against Egypt disturbs the geographical progression and was added here at a later redactional stage to connect the passage to the time in which Rome will be the antagonist power and the people of God will fulfil their role as moral guides for all mankind.<sup>102</sup>

Babylon, Rome, and Gog and Magog are all associated with the destruction of the temple, either historically or traditionally. Through her predictions of judgement over the nations the Sibyl establishes a setting for the divine dominion to come. The section is followed by various oracles against cities in Asia Minor which will not be discussed in this analysis for reasons of scope.<sup>103</sup> In the section at hand the confluence of the horizontal and vertical lines is visible. Whereas the outline of the nations moves along the horizontal geographical line the divine retribution that awaits them is on the vertical line. A fixed demarcation between the human and the divine realm can be observed in the passage on the destruction of the temple and Babylon's punishment. Babylon is punished because it violated the divine realm.

In the section at hand, judgement is inescapable and final. In section V, beginning in line 489, this view changes dramatically. In section V the nations will be able to partake in God's universal dominion provided they turn to him and heed his law. The fixed demarcation between the human and the divine realm will be nullified when God manifests his divine dominion on earth. As I have already established in the introduction, lines 350-488 will not be discussed in this thesis. The discussion will resume in line 489.

---

<sup>102</sup> Cf. lines 192-195.

<sup>103</sup> For discussion see Buitenwerf, 2003, 229-35.

## 6 Section V: Lines 489-600

### *Judgement of the nations and the role of the people of God*

#### 6.1 Introduction

Section V contains oracles against several nations such as Phrygia, Crete, Gog, and Thrace. Stylistically the section is analogous to lines 300ff using the woe-oracular style. The oracles against the nations are inspired by biblical prophecies as can be found in Isa 23; Ezek 26-28 with regard to the Phoenicians as well Ezek 25:16; 30:5 and Zeph 2:5-6 with regard to Crete. The oracles may also be influenced by the generic sibylline oracles in 401-488. However, the focus on the oracles here is the nations' disregard for God's kingship and the law. Again, the notion comes to the fore that the law applies to all nations alike, even though it was only given to the people of God. The people of God, on the other hand, are embellished for keeping the law and adhering to the will (βουλή) of God (599-600).

The Sibyl shares a common feature with the later prophets (i.e. exilic - post-exilic prophetic writings), namely that threats that had previously been made against Israel are now turned against the nations (implying salvation for Israel). Most of these threats come from no more than four verses in Deuteronomy, namely the *Vergeblichkeitsflüche* (futility curses) in 28:30-3.<sup>1</sup> The futility curse is a form of ANE curse that is often used by the biblical prophets.<sup>2</sup> In this kind of curse, the effort made to reach a goal in the thesis is set over against the futility of that goal in the antithesis. To my knowledge no such material can be found in classical Greek literature. The Sibyl does not reproduce the vocabulary of Deut 28, where a chain of futility curses are found, but she seems to apply a considerable amount of Homeric vocabulary. Amir tried to show in his article on Homeric wording in Sib. Or. 3 how Homeric and biblical language are interwoven here and came to the conclusion that anyone with a Greek *paideia* would recognise the clandestine allusions to the Iliad.<sup>3</sup> This view has recently been challenged by Lightfoot who claims that most of the 'echoes are hardly strong enough to trigger recognition of particular passages [of the Iliad], or even Homer at all'.<sup>4</sup> She admits that the usage of 'motifs' from Deut 28 is also quite loose.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the Sibyl uses Homeric language and biblical imagery; the question to what extent cannot always be sufficiently answered and shall not be the goal of the study.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 227.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Deut 28:30, 39; Zeph 1:13; Hos 4:10; Amos 5:11; Mi 6:14, 15. Its positive reversal can be observed in Isa 65:21, 22; Jer 29:5; Amos 9:14. See also Hillers, 1964.

<sup>3</sup> Amir, 1974, 73-89.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 227.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 231-2.

The passage also contains numerous allusions to the Titanomachy. The Sibyl relativises the dominion of the Titans once more by explicitly accusing the Greeks of venerating dead kings. The veneration of the Titans, who are nothing but deified kings, is idolatry (cf. lines 551-55). Idolatry is the origin of all kinds of vices and evils. Therefore, the Greeks will be punished and so by proxy the Titans. However, the Titans had already been destroyed by God (cf. lines 156-158) which was their punishment for starting the first war. Furthermore, the oracles against the nations continue the discourse of the biblical prophets in a time when the ethnic boundaries began to blur.<sup>6</sup>

It can be argued that the section is influenced by the Table of Nations tradition.<sup>7</sup> This influence should not be overstressed but it is evident that the Sibyl drew from established traditions of her time. The table of nations, in one form or another, was one of them (see Section I above). The oracle is introduced as an oracle concerning the earth as a whole (κατὰ γαῖαν), i.e. the sphere of men, that is the entire habitable earth. Then, the Sibyl addresses various nations, including Magog who in Gen 10:2 is among the sons of Japheth, but also Ethiopians, Hellenes, Galatians and many others. The Sibyl uses Greek nomenclature that was current in her time. In his account of the Table of Nations, Josephus attributes the change of names from Hebrew to Greek to the Greeks.<sup>8</sup> However, already in the LXX names of places and nations were updated to the Greek vernacular.

Although a lot is going on the horizontal line, the book prepares for the ending and moves along the vertical line more and more. In the section at hand the nations are increasingly accused of defying God and his law. The Greeks, on the other hand, are singled out by an admonition to turn and convert to God and his law so that they might be saved from judgement. Whereas in the first half of the book the Sibyl's interest in the nations is mainly on the horizontal line, her focus increasingly turns towards the vertical. The nations are not only allotted a place on the Sibyl's map or in universal history but also in the Sibyl's salvation programme – provided they abandon idolatry and accept God's law and sovereignty.

## 6.2 Structure

489-491	Introduction to a new prophecy
492-503	Oracle against the Phoenicians
504-519	Universal judgement
520-540	Oracle against Greece

---

<sup>6</sup> Hagedorn, 2010, 116. 335.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Scott, 1995, 39.

<sup>8</sup> Josephus, Ant 1.120-147.



- 541-544 The end of the tripartite division of the earth  
 545-572 First admonition of the Greeks  
           562-572 The race of impious men (the Greeks)  
 573-600 The race of pious men (the people of God)

### 6.3 Introduction to a new prophecy (489-491)

489 ἦνίκα δὴ μοι θυμὸς ἐπαύσατο ἔνθεον ὕμνον,  
 490 καὶ πάλι μοι μέγαλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσιν  
 491 ἴστατο καὶ μ' ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ γαῖαν.

Then my mind stopped the inspired hymn  
 And again the oracle of the great God rose in my chest  
 And commanded me to prophesy about the earth.

Lines 489-491 contain yet another introduction formula similar to those seen in lines 162-165, 196-198, and 295-299.<sup>9</sup> The formula introduces a new section. It is also the last formula of this kind in the remainder of the book. The rest of the book is structured by four admonitions with direct address.

However, the formula is shorter than the others and is addressed κατὰ γαῖαν, the denominator πᾶς is omitted here. Also, the kings of the earth are omitted this time. This is probably because the section focuses on the Greeks and on the pious people rather than on the entire earth. At the same time, there are also oracles against some other nations and regions in Asia and Europe.

The Sibyl rounds off the introduction with the remark that she will not proclaim each of the nations individually because God will send inflictions upon all nations, as many as inhabit the earth (line 517-19). Here, she makes it clear that God will judge the entire earth even though she does not mention all peoples inhabiting it. As in line 295, the Sibyl says that she was stopped uttering the oracle which is presupposing the previous section. With the formula the author gives us a structure.

Lines 489 and 490 are identical to lines 295 and 297 respectively. Line 296 is omitted in the formula at hand. Line 491 and 298 are almost identical, except that 491 ends with κατὰ γαῖαν while 298 ends with κατὰ πᾶσαν and continues with γαῖαν καὶ βασιλεῦσι... in 299. In short, lines 489-91 appear as an abbreviated version of the previous formula. This is not a coincidence. But what is the author's intention? Other than in 299ff he is not aiming at

<sup>9</sup> See comments on lines 162-165 for details and table there.

addressing kings and their respective kingdoms, he is aiming at the entire earth. Its mortal rulers are no longer of importance.

#### 6.4 An oracle against the lawless Phoenicians (492-503)

492 αἰαῖ Φοινίκων γένει ἀνδρῶν ἠδὲ γυναικῶν,  
 493 καὶ πάσαις πόλεσιν παραλίαις, οὐδεμί' ὑμῶν  
 494 πρὸς φάος ἡελίοιο<sup>10</sup> παρέσσεται ἐν φαῖ κοινῷ,  
 495 οὐδ' ἔτι τῆς ζωῆς ἀριθμὸς καὶ φῶλον ἔτ' ἔσται  
 496 ἀντ' ἀδίκου γλώττης ἀνόμου τε βίου καὶ ἀνάγνου,  
 497 ὃν κατέτριψαν πάντες ἀνοίγοντες στόμ' ἀναγνον,  
 498 καὶ δεινοὺς διέθεντο λόγους ψευδεῖς τ' ἀδίκους τε  
 499 κᾶσθησαν κατέναντι θεοῦ μεγάλου βασιλῆος  
 500 κῆνοιξαν ψευδῶς μυσαρὸν στόμα. τοῦνεκ' ἄρ' αὐτοῦς  
 501 ἐκπάγλως πληγαῖσι δαμάσσειεν παρὰ πᾶσαν  
 502 γαῖαν καὶ πικρὴν μοίρην πέμψει θεὸς αὐτοῖς  
 503 ἐξ ἐδάφους φλέξας πόλιας καὶ πολλὰ θέμεθλα.

Woe to the race of Phoenician men and women,  
 and to all (their) coastal cities, none of you  
 will come to the sunlight in common light.  
 There will no longer be an extent of life or tribe,  
 for their language was unjust and their life lawless and impious,  
 which are all carried out when they open their impious mouth,  
 and they produced terrible, deceitful and unjust words  
 and they stood the presence of<sup>11</sup> God the great king  
 and they opened lying their loathsome mouth. Therefore, he will  
 terribly subdue them with blows more than any other  
 land and God will send a bitter fate unto them  
 burning their cities from the ground and many foundations.

Right after the introduction formula the Sibyl introduces an *ex eventu* woe-oracle against the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians are divided into men and women, another merism to describe the people as a whole. Along with Phoenicia all their coastal cities will be subject to God's judgement. Again, the focus is on the Mediterranean rim.

The Sibyl 'warns (493-5), accuses (496-500), and reinforces those warnings (500-3), all in a structure bound together by ἀντ' and τοῦνεκ'<sup>12</sup>. Again, the accusations are of ethical nature; the Phoenicians are accused of impious and lawless behaviour. The adjectives used to describe their immoral behaviour - ἄδικος, ἄνομος, ἀνάγνος - are recurring throughout the book. Especially the first two are related to the disregard of God's law. The Phoenicians are

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Homer, Od. 11.93-94.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. 2 Cor 2:17. This is a translation suggested by L&N.

<sup>12</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 223.

accused of standing in the presence of God (in court)<sup>13</sup> who is referred to as the great king (θεοῦ μεγάλου βασιλῆος). The appellation of God as the great king is probably not coincidental at this point. The Phoenicians are accused of lying to God in the divine court. Seen in light of line 299 where the earth and kings were addressed, the Sibyl omits those kings in lines 489ff which suggests that only God is the true king. Again, the Sibyl thinks of God as the universal ruler (see also: the image of God). The lawlessness of the Phoenicians is also stressed in lines 597-600 where they are mentioned among the nations that transgress the law.

Like the oracle against Gog and Magog in lines 319-322 the oracle seems to allude to Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 26-28.<sup>14</sup> In Isa 23 and Ezek 26-28 oracles against Tyre and Sidon, two important Phoenician cities, can be found. In Ezek 26:2 Sor (=Tyre) is accused of speaking against Jerusalem (εἶπεν Σορ ἐπὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ) and 28:1-10 the inhabitants are accused of pride. In a similar way, the Sibyl accuses the Phoenicians of standing before God in court and give false testimony (499-500). Lines 496-500 all speak of one and the same offence, namely defying God and speaking falsely. The adjectives used are ἄδικος, ἄνομος, and ἄναγνος all of which are recurring terms throughout the book.<sup>15</sup> The latter stands for cultic uncleanness and impiety in general. It is one of the terms repeatedly used to describe the Greeks (cf. lines 171ff et al). ἄδικος and ἄνομος describe disobedience to the (divine) law. It is possible that the Sibyl has idolatry in mind, which is also a recurring theme in the book and is often the source of other vices. By way of contrast the Sibyl speaks of those obedient to the law as δίκαιος.<sup>16</sup> The Sibyl frequently uses ἄναγνος with regard to the Greeks.<sup>17</sup> These epithets are all on the vertical line – because the Phoenicians are unrighteous, lawless and unclean they are an offense of God and will be punished.

We have already observed in section II that during the first century BCE the Phoenicians were a nation of the past revered by the Greeks as merchants and remembered in the Hebrew Bible in connection with the building of the temple.<sup>18</sup> The Phoenicians were mentioned in the chain of kingdoms in line 168 as the ones who set foot an Asia. In fact, they are said to have had trade routes to Anatolia. The oracle against Phoenicia reconnects the passage at hand with the succession of kingdoms in lines 162-195. The Phoenicians will suffer even more terribly

<sup>13</sup> The expression of standing in the pressenc of God the king implies that a court is in session. In the ANE the king was also the judge. See also chapter 3.3.5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 246.

<sup>15</sup> Sib. Or. 3.183, 362, 496, 498, 730 (ἄδικος), Sib. Or. 3.496, 763 (ἄνόμος), Sib. Or. 3.171, 203, 496, 695 (ἄναγνος).

<sup>16</sup> Sib. Or. 3.166, 214, 219, 233, 237, 257, 312, 720, 782.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. lines 171, 203.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Chr 2:14.

than any other nations, because of their pride, i.e. their hubris through defying God (501-2a). The passage concludes with the remark that God will send a terrible fate (μοῖρα) unto them. Again, the punishment is described as a blow (πληγή) of God which is further elaborated on line 503 via the destruction of the Phoenician cities. The term πληγή is one that the Sibyl shares with the LXX and the NT for that matter.<sup>19</sup> Supposed the oracle is an ex eventu oracle, it is possibly about the destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE.<sup>20</sup>

While in section II the Phoenicians received no negative assessment, they are now included among the nations that transgress the law of God. Implicitly, they are among those nations that the Sibyl admonishes to turn to God and his law.<sup>21</sup>

### 6.5 Universal judgement of the Most High (504-519)

In lines 504-519 the Sibyl announces doom for several nations such as Crete, Thrace, Greece, Gog and Magog, the Lycians, Mysians, Phrygians, Pamphylians, Lydians, Maurians, Ethiopians, Cappadocians and Arabs. The Sibyl continues the woe-formula style. From Phoenicia in the east, the Sibyl then turns westwards to Crete. Crete is also mentioned in line 140 in the account of the Titans. Crete will likewise suffer a great blow (πληγή) of God, who is described as the eternal one (αἰώνιος). Rather than a historical allusion, the oracle against Crete contains allusions to the oracle against Edom in Isa 34:9-10 and seems to be familiar with the oracles against Crete in Ezek 25:16; 30:5 LXX, and Zeph 2:5-6.<sup>22</sup> Crete stands separate from Greece as the Sibyl treats the Greek islands independently throughout the book.<sup>23</sup>

From Crete, the Sibyl then moves further west to Thrace. Thrace is said to be ravaged by the Galatians along with the rest of Greece (510). This is the only mention of Thrace in Sib. Or. 3. From the mention of Greece in line 510 it is probable to assume that the Sibyl uses Thrace as a name for Greece as a whole. The Sibyl omits the Greek main-land cities - probably because she is fairly unfamiliar with them. Greece as a whole, however, is referred to several times.<sup>24</sup> It seems like the Sibyl's interest is not so much in Greece as a country but in its people. In Greco-Roman literature Thrace is a collective name for the northern Balkan

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Exod 11:1; 12:13; 33:5 et al. Rev 9:18, 20 et al.

<sup>20</sup> The destruction Carthage is mentioned in line 485. Carthage was originally founded by the Phoenicians whom the Romans referred to as Punics (hence the Punic Wars).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. comments on lines 545-572, 624-651, 732-740, and in lines 762-766.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Hagedorn, 2010, 114.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Delos (363), Samos (363, 463); Rhodes (444), Tenedos (486), and Chios (422).

<sup>24</sup> 537, 545, 598, 639, 732, 810, 813.

Peninsula.<sup>25</sup> In Genesis Rabbah Tiras, a son of Japheth,<sup>26</sup> is identified with Thrace. Chances are Thrace stands for mainland Greece in addition to Crete which stands for the islands.

Lines 515-517a break the woe-formula style. The Sibyl lists various regions and nations that will fall without addressing them in the second person or elaborating on their fates. The nations listed are Pamphylians, Lydians, Maurians, Ethiopians, people of barbarian (i.e. foreign) tongue, Cappadocians, and Arabs. The Ethiopians, Maurians, Barbarians, and Arabs point to the ends of the earth. Ethiopians represent the southernmost nations along with the Maurians<sup>27</sup> or Moors. The “nations of barbarian speech” is not necessarily an epithet for the Cappadocians and the Arabs<sup>28</sup> - rather than that, it can signify a different set of nations. For example, in the Iliad it is used as an epithet for the Carians.<sup>29</sup> Within the list they stand on their own as they are connected via τε καὶ ... τε. By pointing to the ends of the earth the Sibyl heralds universal judgement.<sup>30</sup>

517b ...τί δὴ κατὰ μοῖραν ἕκαστον  
518 ἐξαυδῶ; πᾶσιν γάρ, ὅσοι χθόνα ναιετάουσιν,  
519 Ὑψιστος δεινὴν ἐπιπέμψει ἔθνεσι πληγὴν.

But why should I proclaim the fate of each individually?  
For on all peoples, as many as inhabit,  
the Most High will send a terrible blow.

The passage concludes with a statement by the Sibyl: 'But why should I proclaim the fate of each individually?'. A similar phrase was used in line 210. The Sibyl then concludes that all nations that inhabit the earth will be judged by God (518-19). It is said that the most high will destroy all the nations of the earth with a terrible blow (πληγὴ).<sup>31</sup> Again, the term πληγὴ is used, which is commonly used by the LXX to designate divine blows. The term is also used of the gods in classical literature.<sup>32</sup> The blows described evidently occur on the vertical line. God is described as the one directing the events from heaven, wherefore it is said that he will send (πέμπω) the afflictions. The sending implies that God is spatially (and obviously

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Homer, Ilias, 434-435. Greece was divided into three parts; northern Greece, the Peloponnese and the islands (cf. Forbiger, 1966, 3:567).

<sup>26</sup> Gen. Rab. 37.1.

<sup>27</sup> Probably derived from μαυρόω (LSJ, 925): A. = ἀμαυρόω, darken, blind: hence, make powerless, cf. Aeschylus, Eum. 358f; Pindar, Isthm. 4(3).48.

2. metaph., make dim or obscure, “ῥεῖα δέ μιν μαυροῦσι θεοὶ” Hesiod, Op. 325:—Pass., become dim or obscure, Hesiod, Theog. 192, Aeschylus, Ag. 296.

Probably a reference to dark skinned peoples of Africa. Cf. Polybius, Hist 22.16; Cassius Dio, Hist. 78.11.1.

<sup>28</sup> Contra Buitenwerf, 2003, 250.

<sup>29</sup> speaking a foreign tongue, of “Κᾶρες” in Homer, Il. 2.867; of the Persians in Herodotus, Hist. 8.20; 9.43. 2. speaking bad Greek, Strabo, Geogr. 14.2.28 (LSJ, “βαρβαρόφωνος,” 306).

<sup>30</sup> The passage is vaguely reminiscent of the Pentecost event in Acts 2:9 where similar couplets of nations are listed, although none are identical to the ones here, to signify the ends of the earth.

<sup>31</sup> For Ὑψιστος see Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>32</sup> Aeschylus, Ag. 367; Pers. 908; Sophocles, Aj. 137, 279; in Josephus, B.J. 5.283 for the plagues of Egypt.

hierarchically) separated from men. The sending of the afflictions points to God's residing in heaven just as the very name Ὑψιστος. The hierarchic division between the human and the divine is also the geographical division between earth and heaven. The verb πέμπω in connection with the subject θεός or Ὑψιστος has a few occurrences in the Third Sibyl.<sup>33</sup> The formula is used to signify God's intervention. Since God is in heaven, he sends afflictions or means of salvation (like a king) from heaven. This feature is especially obvious in line 286 (see comment there). This usage of πέμπω is not unparalleled in biblical and post-biblical texts.<sup>34</sup>

The Sibyl's universalism could not be expressed any clearer. The highest God, who is the only god, will judge all people on earth.<sup>35</sup> Only the righteous will escape his judgement as we are told in the next section.

## 6.6 An oracle against Greece (520-40)<sup>36</sup>

The passage contains another lengthy oracle against Greece which is wrapped in biblical style. The Sibyl predicts that a truly barbarian nation will cause grave disaster for Hellas. The passage is loosely based on Deuteronomy 28, which contains curses pronounced against Israel should they disobey God's commandments. In Sib. Or. 3 these predictions are recast against Greece; a familiar technique which we have already observed in her oracle against Babylon. In lines 248-94, however, she used the deuteronomistic theme of exile as punishment for the disobedience of the law.

520 Ἑλλῆσιν δ' ὅπταν πολὺν βάρβαρον ἔθνος ἐπέλθῃ,  
When a truly barbarian people descends on the Greeks,

The Sibyl announces that a very barbarian people will come upon Greece and ravage it. It is obvious that by barbarian she does not mean 'not Greek speaking' but rather 'brutal' or 'rude'.<sup>37</sup> In 2 Macc 2:21, it is used for the Greeks. The author could have the sufferings of the Greeks at the hand of the Romans in the second century BCE in mind<sup>38</sup>, specifically the Roman conquest of Macedonia in 168 BCE (see comment on line 511).<sup>39</sup> The prophecy is repeated in lines 638f, where it is safe to assume that 'barbarian rule' refers to the Romans

<sup>33</sup> Cf. lines 286 (καὶ τότε δὴ θεὸς οὐρανόθεν πέμψει βασιλῆα), 502 (γαῖαν καὶ πικρὴν μοίρην πέμψει θεὸς αὐτοῖς), 652 (καὶ τότε ἅπ' ἡελίοιο θεὸς πέμψει βασιλῆα).

<sup>34</sup> Ezra 5:17; 2 Macc 1:20; 3:38; Acts 10:33; Rom 8:3; 1 Thess 3:2; 2 Thess 2:11; Sib. Or. 1.37; Jos. Asen. 25:7; Ezek. Trag. 1.116; Artap. 324 (θεός); 1 En. 10.1 (Ὑψιστος).

<sup>35</sup> χθών in Greek literature can denote the earth in the sense of ground as well as the whole world. Cf. LSJ, "χθών," 1991.

<sup>36</sup> For reasons of scope not all lines can be discussed.

<sup>37</sup> LSJ, "βάρβαρος," 306.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 251. Cf. also lines 332, 638 for similar usages of the term.

<sup>39</sup> Gauger, 1998, 499.

(see comment there). At the same time,, the prophecy could also be seen in the biblical when-then style rather than against a specific historical background. Lines 545ff admonish the Greeks to change their ways lest they will be destroyed. The image of war and destruction, which the bible often uses in regard to Israel, is turned against the foreign nation (cf. also lines 248-94). The same theme recurs later on in the oracle in more eschatological language (663-697). Lightfoot describes the method in which the biblical theme is evoked as 'montage'<sup>40</sup>, a collage of allusions assembled from more than one scriptural source.

In line 539 it is said that God will cause a draught upon Hellas by making a brazen sky (χάλκειόν τε μέγαν τεύξει θεὸς οὐρανὸν ὑψοῦ). The idea that God will make a brazen sky derives from biblical draught imagery.<sup>41</sup> Other motifs, like war, slavery, pestilence and judgement by fire also evoke biblical imagery.<sup>42</sup> However, the calamities also contain reminiscences to the Oracle of the Potter.<sup>43</sup>

In the following section (lines 545-561), the Greeks are addressed by the Sibyl and admonished to forsake their idolatry and their false belief in mortal rulers. This is a new element on the vertical line: The Greeks can establish a relationship to God and gain a place in future happiness if they convert and accept his sovereignty and law.

## 6.7 Only a third of mankind will survive: the end of the tripartite division of the earth (541-44)

541 αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα βροτοὶ δεινῶς κλαύσουσιν ἅπαντες  
 542 ἀσπορίην καὶ ἀνηροσίην· καὶ πῦρ ἐπὶ γαίης  
 543 κατθήσει πολὺν ἱστὸν, ὃς οὐρανὸν ἔκτισε καὶ γῆν<sup>44</sup>.  
 544 πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων τὸ τρίτον μέρος ἔσσεται αὐτίς.

Then all mortals will terribly weep  
 for the lack of sowing and plowing, and the one who created heaven and earth  
 will set many-tongued fire on the earth  
 and then only a third of all men will survive.

From the Greeks the Sibyl moves to mankind as a whole. Calamities will be on upon all men. In line 544 the Sibyl predicts that mankind will be reduced to a third (πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων τὸ τρίτον μέρος ἔσσεται αὐτίς). Only a third part (μέρος) of mankind will survive - after the flood the earth was divided into three parts (μέρος) according to the three sons of Gaia and Uranus; Cronus, Titan, and Iapetos or Ham, Shem and Japheth accordingly (see

<sup>40</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 226.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Lev 26:19; Deut 28:23.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Lev 26; Deut 28; 32.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. P<sub>2</sub> 4; 32; 39-41 and P<sub>3</sub> 65-67. See also comment on lines 608ff.

<sup>44</sup> See Excursus on lines 785ff.

comment on lines 110-158). There, the world was divided into three parts according to the lot of each of them (τρισσαι δὴ μερίδες γαίης κατὰ κλῆρον ἐκάστου) and each one had a share (μέρος) until eventually they broke their father's oath and war broke out among them and ultimately started war for all mankind. It is possible that the Sibyl picks up on the Titanomachy via the catchwords τὸ τρίτον μέρος. If the Sibyl has the tripartite division of the earth among the three sons of Uranus (Noah) in mind, the third of mankind that will remain certainly are the descendants of Shem, of whom the Jews, i.e. the people of God are descendants. In Zech 13.8 and Rev 9:15, we find the notion that one third of mankind will be killed. However, according to the Sibyl two thirds will be killed and only one third will survive.

The terms πόλεμος and κυδοιμός in line 535 also evoke the Titan War (line 153). One can see that the Sibyl thinks of a punishment for the Greeks, who are descendants of the Titans, for starting war in the first place. In her account of the liar prophet Homer, she accused him of embellishing the Trojan War (lines 419ff).<sup>45</sup> War is the typical motif of the Sibyl with regard to the Greeks wherefore they will be punished.

## 6.8 First admonition of the Greeks (545-561)<sup>46</sup>

545 Ἐλλάς δὴ, τί πέποιθας ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν ἡγεμόνεσσιν  
 546 θνητοῖς, οἷς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν θανάτοιο τελευτήν;  
 547 πρὸς τί τε δῶρα μάταια καταφθιμένοισι πορίζεις  
 548 θύεις τ' εἰδώλοις; τίς τοι πλάνον ἐν φρεσὶ θῆκεν  
 549 ταῦτα τελεῖν προλιποῦσα θεοῦ μέγαλοιο πρόσωπον;  
 550 οὔνομα παγγενέταο σέβας δ' ἔχε, μηδὲ λάθη σε.  
 551 χίλια δ' ἔστ' ἔτεα καὶ πένθ' ἑκατοντάδες ἄλλαι,  
 552 ἐξ οὗ δὴ βασίλευσαν ὑπερφίαλοι βασιλῆες  
 553 Ἑλλήνων, οἱ πρῶτα βροτοῖς κακὰ ἡγεμόνευσαν,  
 554 πολλὰ θεῶν εἶδωλα καταφθιμένων θανεόντων  
 555 ὧν ἔνεκεν τὰ μάταια φρονεῖν ὑμῖν ὑπεδείχθη.  
 556 ἀλλ' ὁπότεν μέγαλοιο θεοῦ χόλος ἔσσεται ὑμῖν,  
 557 δὴ τότε' ἐπιγνώσεσθε θεοῦ μέγαλοιο πρόσωπον.  
 558 πᾶσαι δ' ἀνθρώπων ψυχὰι μεγάλα στενάχουσαι  
 559 ἅντα πρὸς οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἀνασχόμεναι χέρας αὐτῶν  
 560 ἄρξονται βασιλῆα μέγαν ἐπαμύντορα κλήζειν  
 561 καὶ ζητεῖν ῥυστῆρα χόλου μέγαλοιο, τίς ἔσται.

Greece, why do you trust in human, mortal leaders  
 Who are not able to flee the end of death?  
 Why do you give idle gifts to the dead  
 and sacrifice to idols? Who put deceit in your heart

<sup>45</sup> Aristobulus also attests that Homer and Hesiod copied from the works of the Jews. Cf. Aristob. 5.5.

<sup>46</sup> Not all lines can be discussed in detail for reasons of scope.



to do these things and to desert the face of the great God?  
 Revere the father of all and forget him not.  
 A thousand years and five hundred more  
 since the overbearing kings of the Greeks reigned  
 who lead men to the first wicked things  
 many images of mortal, deceased gods.  
 Through them you have been taught vain thinking.  
 But when the anger of the great God comes upon you  
 you will recognise the face of the great God.  
 All souls of men will groan  
 raising their hands up to broad heaven  
 they will begin to call upon the great king as their helper  
 and to seek for a deliverer from the great wrath.

The Sibyl personifies Greece by addressing it in the second person singular. The same method was used in the woe-oracles against Babylon and Gog (and Magog for that matter) in lines 300-330. Addressing a nation or a city in that fashion is biblical style. However, instead of announcing judgment and destruction for Greece the Sibyl admonishes the Greeks to abandon their ways and their trust in mortal kings. The cyclic nature of sin and punishment is now breached via the possibility of conversion to God.

The theme of the Titanomachy is carried on. The Sibyl asks the Greeks why they put their trust in mortal leaders who are unable to escape the inevitability of death. This is another allusion to the passage on the Titans, whom the Greeks venerated as gods although they were only mortals who caused the first war and initiated the beginning of all war on earth.<sup>47</sup> Lines 547-48 refer to the veneration of dead idols. Because the Greek Gods were merely mortal kings, offerings made for them are nothing but 'vain gifts (δῶρα μάταια) to the dead' and their veneration is nothing other than 'sacrifice to images' (θύεις τ' εἰδώλοις). The accusations clearly evoke the euhemeristic passages in lines 108-158 and 429-30.<sup>48</sup>

The Sibyl continues to question Hellas and asks who put deceit (πλάνος) in her heart and by doing these things (ταῦτα) forsaken the face (πρόσωπον) of the mighty God.<sup>49</sup> In lines 556-61 it is said that the Greeks will know the face, i.e. the countenance of God when his wrath (χόλος) will be upon them (cf. lines 549 where it was said that they forsook the face of God). Lines 549 and 557 correspond to each other as both are constructed according to the scheme verb + θεοῦ μεγάλοιο πρόσωπον. In their suffering they will eventually raise their hands to heaven and call upon the help of the great king. It is not circumstantial that the Sibyl

<sup>47</sup> Cf. lines 110-158a. Cf. Diodorus Siculus, 6.1; 5.41.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Isa 19:3.

<sup>49</sup> The usage of the word πρόσωπον is curious. In the LXX πρόσωπον frequently denotes God's countenance in anthropomorphic expressions. God's lifting his countenance means grace and peace. Prayer is made that his face may shine on Israel (Num 6:25). Hiding his face denotes withdrawal of grace (Deut 32:20) (E. Lohse, "πρόσωπον," TWNT 6:773).

here uses the king-imagery to describe God. She is probably invoking lines 543-44 where she accuses the Greeks of putting their faith in mortal leaders and dead kings instead of God, the true king, whose countenance (πρόσωπον) they relinquish. In line 552-53 it referred to the arrogant kings of old, i.e. the Titans. The Sibyl is constantly criticising the Greek kings and, above all, the Greeks who revere them as Gods.

The Greeks are contrasted with the pious. In lines 221-28 it is said of the pious that they stay away from things that lead astray (πλανάω) from God and his ways (i.e. the law)<sup>50</sup>. The practice of idolatry led the Greeks away from God because they put what leads astray, namely πλάνος in their hearts instead of faith. In lines 221-36 the Sibyl also speaks of 'foolish men' who have taught deceit (πλάνας) from which much evil came upon men on earth because they are misled in regard to righteous deeds. In that passage the Sibyl was referring to the astronomy and astrology of the Chaldeans saying that these are the things that lead astray because implicitly they lead to idolatry. Now the Greeks are known to have venerated the Chaldeans for their sciences and that they had learned them from them.<sup>51</sup> It's possible that the Sibyl had this in mind when she accused them of putting πλάνος - that which leads away from God - in their hearts because in lines 221-36 it is also said that the practices of astrology and astronomy lead to all kinds of evils that came upon the earth (ἐξ ὧν δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ βροτοῖς πέλεται κατὰ γαῖαν).<sup>52</sup> In lines 275-79, it is furthermore implied that because God is the creator of all things he is to be worshipped rather than his creation.<sup>53</sup> In the Third Sibyl, the rejection of idolatry is often accompanied by a reference to God as creator.<sup>54</sup> The rejection of astronomy and astrology is in accord with the perception that men are not supposed to speculate about things that belong to the heavens, i.e. the divine sphere.

In line 550, the Greeks are admonished to revere the name of the father of all (παγγενέτης)<sup>55</sup>. Παγγενέτης stresses the superiority of God in many ways. Indirectly, God is also the creator of the Titans whom the Greek venerated as Gods and of Gaia and Uranus whom they dubbed Earth and Heaven implying that they created them.

In lines 551-55, the Sibyl explicitly recurs on the Titan origin of the Greeks. She counts 1500 years since the arrogant (ὑπερφίαλοι) kings of the Greeks first brought evil into the world.<sup>56</sup> This time, the reference to the Titans, who started the first war by trespassing the

<sup>50</sup> See comments on 220ff; 721-23; 777-79. See also Part III: The law in the Third Sibyl.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Josephus, C. Ap. 1.14.

<sup>52</sup> Note that the word "planet" derives from the πλαν-root.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. lines 275b-279, 601-606.

<sup>54</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 255.

<sup>55</sup> Παγγενέτης is an epithet of Zeus. Cf. Orpheus, Hymni 20.5. The feminine form παγγενέτειρα occurs on line 744 where it describes the earth. Cf. AnthLyrGraec 1:19.11. See also comments on line 744.

<sup>56</sup> It is not clear whether this counting is from the point of view of the author of the Sibyl.

border's of one another's territories - is obvious. They brought evil into the world by worshipping idols and have thus taught the Greeks to believe in vain things. In lines 171-72 and 202-205 the Sibyl described the Greek kings as ὑπερφίαλοι καὶ ἄναγνοι (arrogant and impious). The use of wording makes it clear that she is referring to the same kings throughout.

The Greeks are accused of trusting in mortal leaders (545), giving presents to the dead (546), and sacrificing to images (548). All these things signify one and the same sin, idolatry, which the first Greek kings, i.e. the Titans, started in the first place (cf. lines 111-113). The Greek kings are accused of having started the first wicked things, πρῶτα κακὰ (553). These things are idolatry and the beginning of war. In her passage on Homer, the Sibyl also accused the Greeks by proxy as warmongers (426f). By proxy, the Greeks were the first who severed the ties between men and God by bringing idolatry and war to the world. However, once judgement has come to pass they are given a chance to reconnect with God (556-570).

The entire section is about the human-divine relation, i.e. the vertical line. It oracle picks up on the beginning of the book and prepares for the divine dominion which will be established once the wicked nations have been punished.

It is a common Jewish tradition that polytheism is a deprived form of monotheism and that originally all men were monotheists. The Sibyl names the Titans, i.e. the first Greek kings, as the originators of polytheism.<sup>57</sup> Eventually, however, the Greeks will realise their erroneous ways and turn to God for salvation (556-561). Once judgement will be upon them they will realise the vanity of their kings and turn to the great king (βασιλεύς μέγας), the only true and legitimate king, the creator of heaven and earth and lord of the same.<sup>58</sup> Once again, God, the true king, is set over against the mortal kings of men.

## 6.9 The race of impious men (562-572)<sup>59</sup>

568 ἀλλὰ μέχρις γε τοσοῦδ' ἄσεβων γένος ἔσσεται ἀνδρῶν,  
569 ὅπποτε κεν τοῦτο προλάβῃ τέλος αἰσιμον ἥμαρ.

But the race of impious men will exist  
until the day appointed by fate comes to an end.

In lines 562-72 the Sibyl admonishes the Greeks to learn what she has to tell them and bear in mind that they cannot be saved as long as the race of impious men exists. It is suggested in

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 256. Cf. also Wis 14:12-13.

<sup>58</sup> ἑπαμύντωρ (helper) in line 560 is a homeric term, cf. Homer, Od. 16.263. The line is an allusion to line 530 where it was said that no one will be the Greeks helper (ἑπαρωγός) in war.

<sup>59</sup> Again, not all lines can be discussed within this thesis.

lines 566-67 that if they sacrifice to God and forsake their ways they can escape judgement. However, like the race of pious men before them (cf. lines 248-94) the Greeks will not be able to escape their fate. Judgement will happen before anyone will be able to repent.<sup>60</sup>

571 ὅσσα θεός γε μόνος βουλεύσεται, οὐκ ἀτέλεστα.

Whatever God the only one has planned will not go unfulfilled.

The passage ends with the remark that these things will indeed happen for the true God never fails to execute his plans (571-72). In line 571 God is μόνος, the one God or the only God. There is no doubt, that the Titans and the idols that the Greeks revere are not gods.<sup>61</sup>

### 6.10 The race of the pious man (573-600)<sup>62</sup>

Following the admonition of the Greeks, the Sibyl starts her second praise of the pious which resembles that in lines 218ff. Her praise is in the third person singular. The word αὖτις (hereafter, moreover) marks the transition to a new passage.<sup>63</sup>

573 εὐσεβέων ἀνδρῶν ἱερὸν γένος ἔσσεται αὖτις

574 βουλαῖς ἡδὲ νόῳ προσκείμενοι Ὑψίστοιο,

575 οἱ ναὸν μέγαλοιο θεοῦ περικυδανέουσιν

There will be a holy race of pious men  
who devote themselves to the will and intention of the Most High,  
who honour the temple of the great God exceedingly,

The Sibyl introduces a holy race of pious men.<sup>64</sup> Again, there is no mention of a gentilium - the Sibyl's differentiation of the pious and impious is one by ethical means. The εὐσεβέων ἀνδρῶν ἱερὸν γένος stands over against the ἀσεβῶν γένος ἀνδρῶν of the Greeks in line 568. The pious are juxtaposed with the impious Greeks who practice idolatry and do not recognise the countenance of God. The pious, on the other hand, are introduced as pious and even as holy (ἱερός).<sup>65</sup> The wording is evidently analogous. The line also resembles lines 218-19 where the people of God were designated as a race of exceedingly righteous men (γένος ἐστὶ δικαιοτάτων ἀνθρώπων). The Sibyl's point is that the pious morally and ethically stand above

<sup>60</sup> The prediction that the Greeks will not obey the Sibyl in fact reflects the situation of the author's own day when the gentiles would not recognise the superiority and truth of Judaism (Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 258).

<sup>61</sup> See also Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>62</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss all lines in detail.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Prov 19:21; Isa 46:10; Jdt 8:16-17; 1QH 12 (4) 13.

<sup>64</sup> A similar description of the Jewish people can be found in Philo, Praem. 83: ...ὅτι σοφὸν ἄρα γένος καὶ ἐπιστημονικώτατον μόνον τοῦτ' ἐστίν. See also Part III: The divine dominion in related literature.

<sup>65</sup> The choice of the term is noteworthy insofar as it scarcely occurs in the LXX and NT probably because they felt the pagan sense of the term. In common Greek usage ἱερός denotes anything that belongs to the divine sphere but also people, such as heroes or emperors and even poets and philosophers. However, both Philo and Josephus use the term frequently and apparently feel less serious about its pagan meaning. It is probable that they, like the Sibyl, owe this to their Diaspora situation.

all the other nations who will be subject to God's judgement. Most importantly, however, the statement of line 194-95 is evoked here. The race of pious men will be guides in life for all mortals. Because they serve as an example, the impious Greeks will be able to turn to God and his law and be exempt from judgement.

The two subordinate clauses in lines 574-75 elaborate on their exemplary nature. They are described as devoting themselves to the will (βουλή) of the Most High (ὑψιστος) and honouring the temple<sup>66</sup> of the Great God. Again, the law and the temple are in tandem. In lines 492-503, the Phoenicians, by contrast were accused of speaking against God and the Greeks were accused of sacrificing to vain idols instead of venerating God. The epithet ὑψιστος recurs here as if the Sibyl is still addressing the Greeks and mediating the Jewish God to them with a term that is familiar to them (cf. line 519 above). In line 580, the Sibyl says that the pious received the law of ὑψιστος in righteousness. The abundant usage of the epithet in this section is noteworthy.

580 ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ νόμου Ὑψίστοιο λαχόντες  
581 ὀλβιοὶ οἰκήσουσι πόλεις καὶ πύονας ἀγρούς,

Having obtained the law of the Most High in righteousness  
they will live blissfully in cities and rich fields,

In lines 580-81, it is said that they shall live blissfully in the cities and in the fields because they have obeyed the divine law - other than the condemned nations. Their happiness is contrasted with the judgement that awaits the nations, who do not heed the law. Living peacefully on God's earth is safeguarded by keeping his law. The happiness of the people of God foreshadows the peaceful conditions in the divine dominion.<sup>67</sup> The lines are reminiscent of Deut 28:3. The merism 'fields and cities' is used elsewhere in the book (237, 707, and 750) to designate the land, i.e. the habitable earth rather than a specific land, as a whole.<sup>68</sup> The statement in line 581 that the people of God will be a great joy to all mortals evokes line 195 where it was said that they would be (moral) guides for all mortals and may have Gen 18:18 in mind where it was promised to Abraham that he would be a blessing to the nations.

The Sibyl further typifies the pious by saying that they are the only ones who have insight into the divine will (βουλή) and therefore to do not practice idolatry.<sup>69</sup> The Sibyl then outlines

<sup>66</sup> The next few lines describe a chain of offerings that the people offer at the temple (576-579). Buitenwerf (2003, 259) notes that in this list both Homeric phrases and word combinations known from Jewish scripture occur.

<sup>67</sup> It should be noted that living happily (ὀλβίος) is also one of the features of the Golden Age in Hesiod's Works and Days (Hesiod, Op. 171). See also comments on lines 744-756, 767ff.

<sup>68</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 200f.

<sup>69</sup> A similar notion can be found in the works of Philo. Philo (Praem. 83) describes the Jewish people as 'only wise and truly learned race of men' (ὅτι σοφὸν ἄρα γένος καὶ ἐπιστημονικώτατον μόνον τοῦτ' ἐστίν).

that those idols are nothing but dead objects made out of gold, bronze, silver, wood or stone. Only the βροτοὶ κενεόφρονι βουλή, people with empty-minded counsel, practice these things (590). These people are juxtaposed with the pious, who do have counsel and insight into the divine will (584-85). The people of God are described as possessing just counsel (βουλή ἀγαθή) and adhering to the council (i.e. the law) of the Most High (βουλαῖς ἡδὲ νόῳ προσκείμενοι Ὑψίστοιο) whereas the Greeks and Romans have minds void of council (βροτοὶ κενεόφρονι βουλή) or possess ill council (κακὴ βουλή).<sup>70</sup> It is evident then that βουλή not merely refers to counsel but to the will of God mediated through the law. The law represents communication between God and man. God gives the law and the people receive it. They are to keep it and live according to it to be an example to the nations. Through the law they in turn have a special relation to God. This reciprocal relationship is on the vertical line in the Sibyl's imagined world. The Greeks can partake in this relationship if they repent. In the next section the law will be transformed into a common law for all people to keep.

The Sibyl states further virtues of the pious like honouring God and one's parents, being monogamous and faithful and abstaining from pederasty<sup>71</sup>. The pious are defined via negationis, i.e. by what they do not do. It is a common technique in Jewish writings ever since the Hebrew Bible to seek self-definition by way of contrast.<sup>72</sup> The vices mentioned are recurring throughout the book.<sup>73</sup> Again, the ethical nature of the law and those who keep it comes to the fore.

A lot of divine epithets occur in line 593-95<sup>74</sup>. It is said that the pious honour (τιμῶσι) the sole one (μόνος)<sup>75</sup>, the eternal guardian (ἀεὶ μεδέοντα), the immortal (ἀθάνατος)<sup>76</sup>. The author creates a contrast to lines 586-590 where it was said that the pious did not honour (οὐκ... τιμῶσιν) dead idols. However, it is also a contrast to line 279 where it is said that they did not honour God but served idols wherefore the temple was destroyed and they were led into exile.

597 ὅσσα τε Φοίνικες Αἰγύπτιοι ἡδὲ Λατῖνοι  
598 Ἑλλάς τ' εὐρύχορος καὶ ἄλλων ἔθνεα πολλά  
599 Περσῶν καὶ Γαλατῶν πάσης τ' Ἀσίας παραβάντες  
600 ἀθανάτοιο θεοῦ ἄγνόν νόμον ὃν παρέβησαν.

...as the Phoenicians, the Egyptians, the Latins,  
spacious Greece, and many nations of other people do,  
Persians, Galatians, and all Asia, who transgress

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Lines 220, 574, 584 and 366, 590, 655 accordingly.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. The Oracle of the Potter (P<sub>3</sub> 48).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. van der Horst, 1995, 147-166.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. lines 185-186, 204 and comments there.

<sup>74</sup> See the image of God for discussion.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. line 571 and comment.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. 101, 302, 328, 582, 601, 631, 711, 721, 759, 766.

the holy law of the Immortal God, which they transgressed.

Lines 597-600 lists and compares to two types of people: those who indulge in vices and those who abstain from them and thus have insight to the βουλή of God. The pious are contrasted to the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Latins (Romans), Greeks, Persians, Galatians, and all Asia. Some of these nations occurred in the oracles of doom in lines 504-519. It is possible that the Sibyl had all other nations of the earth in mind. The naming of Phoenicians, Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, and Persians is not too surprising because they were mentioned frequently throughout the book. The reference to the Galatians and the rest of Asia may be owed to the Sibyl being identified as the Erythrean Sibyl.<sup>77</sup>

It is implied here that even though the nations may not possess the Mosaic Law, they can still transgress it (ἀγνὸν νόμον ὃν παρέβησαν). By way of contrast, they are to keep it although it was not given to them but given to the people of God. The people of God, on the other hand, serve as an example for the nations of the earth to turn to God and his law. In the following section it is said that God will complete the common law for all men. The law, that was implicitly universal to begin with, will be explicitly perfected into a universal law. Here, the Sibyl is certainly influenced by the concept of natural law that we find in Stoicism, Sir 17, and in the works of Philo of Alexandria.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> See line 814 and comments there.

<sup>78</sup> The vices will be discussed in Part III: The common law.

## 7 Section VI: Lines 601-701

### *Völkersturm and the king from the east*

#### 7.1 Introduction

Section VI contains one of the three references to the ‘seventh king of Egypt’ that has been used as a basis to locate the Third Sibyl in second century BCE Egypt. In fact, line 608 provides the source for the references to the seventh king/reign of Egypt in lines 192-193 and 314. In lines 652-656 the Sibyl speaks of a king from the sun/east (π’ ἡελίοιο) that will give the earth rest from war. Collins has argued that the king from the sun/east and the seventh king of Egypt are identical and that he is to be identified with a Ptolemaic king that was favourable to the Egyptian Jews.<sup>1</sup> According to Collins, the sun imagery is taken from the Oracle of the Potter, a demotic oracle from the third century BCE. Rather than that, I argue that the prophecy about the king from sun/the east is based on Isaiah’s prophecy about Cyrus and foreshadows the establishment of the divine dominion within a series of ‘weal and woe’<sup>2</sup> oracles.

#### 7.2 Structure

601-607 Punishment of the idol worshippers

608-623 The seventh reign of Egypt and the king from Asia

608-10 The seventh reign of Egypt

611-15 The king from Asia

616-623 Mass conversion and foreshadows of the divine dominion

624-634 Second admonition

635-651 *Völkersturm* and cataclysmic events

652-656 The king from the east will give rest from war

657-660a The temple will be restored in the age of the king from the east

660b-668 The assault of the ἔθνη

669-697 Judgement of the nations

698-701 Conclusion of the section

---

<sup>1</sup> Collins, 1974, 61-75; 1984, 355-356; 1994, 199-210.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 239.



### 7.3 Punishment of the idol worshippers (601-607)

601 ἀνθ' ὧν ἀθάνατος θήσει πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν  
 602 ἄτην καὶ λιμὸν καὶ πῆματά τε στοναχάς τε  
 603 καὶ πόλεμον καὶ λοιμὸν ἰδ' ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα·  
 604 οὐνεκεν ἀθάνατον γενέτην πάντων ἀνθρώπων  
 605 οὐκ ἔθελον τιμᾶν ὁσίως, εἰδῶλα δ' ἐτίμων  
 606 χειροποίητα σέβοντες, ἃ ρίψουσιν βροτοὶ αὐτοὶ  
 607 ἐν σχισμαῖς πετρῶν κατακρύψαντες δι' ὄνειδος,

Therefore, the Immortal will set upon all mortals  
 bane, famine, misery, groaning,  
 war, pestilence and tearful pains,  
 because they did not want to honour  
 the immortal creator of all according to the law but revered and honoured  
 hand-made idols, which mortals themselves will throw away  
 and hide them in the clefts of rocks out of reproach,

This passage is connected to the previous one (lines 573-600) via the phrase ἀνθ' ὧν (therefore). We have already seen that the Sibyl uses this phraseology in light of the LXX (cf. comment on lines 196ff). The Sibyl continues her scheme of sin and punishment. God will punish the nations because they transgressed his law (cf. line 600). From the embellishment of the pious the author thus makes a transition to the judgement of the nations in the previous lines (Egyptians, Romans, and Greeks etc.). The punishment of the wicked is a standard prophetic theme: in the Hebrew Bible judgement of the nations implicitly is restoration of Israel.<sup>3</sup> Other predictions of doom are directed against the backsliding Israelites.<sup>4</sup> However, the unfaithful can repent and the faithful will be preserved.<sup>5</sup> In the Third Sibyl, on the other hand, it is not Israel that is admonished to repent and keep the divine law but the nations, especially the Greeks.

The entire passage (lines 601-15) starts with a main clause in lines 601-3 and forms one clause.<sup>6</sup> For reasons of clarity and comprehensibility, I have subdivided the section thematically. The Sibyl lists a catalogue of punishments that God will inflict upon all mortals (πάντεσσι βροτοῖσιν). Famine, war, and pestilence are usual elements in such hardship catalogues.<sup>7</sup> The reference to 'all mortals' strengthens the assumption that in lines 497-498 the Sibyl listed the respective nations as a collective name for all the nations.<sup>8</sup>

Lines 604-7 name idolatry as the reason for the impending punishment of the nations. Line 605 picks up on lines 599-600 where it was said that the nations transgress the law of God. In

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Isa 26:7-20; 66:5-24.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Isa 30:15-17; Jer 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Isa 43:22-28; 48:1-11; Isa 63:7-64:11; Jer 3:21-4:4; Zech 14:9; Mal 3:16-18-24.

<sup>6</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 264.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. lines 236, 382, 417, and 438.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. lines 518-519.

line 605 the adverb *ὁσίως* signifies that their actions are against the law.<sup>9</sup> It is also implied that because the idols are made by men's hands (*χειροποίητος*) that they are powerless. This notion is borrowed from biblical tradition.<sup>10</sup> Specific references to one or several nations are omitted. The nations did not heed God's law but revered (*τιμάω*) idols instead. The same term is used in lines 590 and 593 to contrast the pious' reverence of God and the nations' reverence of idols. In line 279 the people of God were likewise accused of idolatry and not honouring (*τιμάω*) God and hence they were punished with exile and the destruction of the temple.

God is referred to as the begetter of all people (*γενέτης πάντων ἀνθρώπων*), a description that matches God's role as sovereign and universal judge. The image of God as universal ruler is paralleled in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>11</sup> Because he is the creator of all men alike, he is able to punish them for their immoral and impious behaviour. The description also matches that of the universal law and God as the universal law giver as it is expressed in lines 261-64, 275-79, and 545-600.

Lines 605-607 are particularly reminiscent of a prophecy in Isaiah 2:18a-19b.<sup>12</sup> In the table below, underlined means verbatim correspondence, bold means deviation in case and/or article.

(Isa 2:18b) <sup>13</sup> καὶ τὰ <u>χειροποίητα</u> πάντα	(Sib. Or. 3.606) <u>χειροποίητα</u> σέβοντες,
<u>κατακρύψουσιν</u>	ἃ ῥίψουσιν βροτοὶ αὐτοὶ
(Isa 2:19a) εἰσενέγκαντες	(Sib. Or. 3.607) ἐν <b>σχισμαῖς πετρῶν</b>
εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς <b>τὰς σχισμὰς τῶν πετρῶν</b>	<u>κατακρύψαντες</u> δι' ὄνειδος

The similarity in wording in the two passages is indeed noteworthy. Even though the Sibyl departs from Isa (or at least from the version that we have today), her influence by the LXX is once more obvious.<sup>14</sup> The reasons why she does not quote entire verses from the LXX are not only of metrical nature but also due to her claim to have prophesied some time after the flood but probably before the prophets. The similarities to Isaiah are not coincidental. The Sibyl is intentionally picking up on a familiar prophecy that was once directed at the people of God to recast it against the nations.

<sup>9</sup> ὁσιος, α, ον = hallowed, i. e. sanctioned or allowed by the law of God or of nature (LSJ, “ὁσιος,” 1260).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Isa 44:6-20; Jer 10:1-16.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Isa 45:14-25.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 265. Cf. Isa 2:18-21; Isa 19:3; 31:7; 37:19. Cf. 1. En. 96:2.

<sup>13</sup> “And they shall hide all handmade things having carried them into caves and into the clefts of rocks.” It is noteworthy that the LXX text differs from the MT reading. According to the MT only verse 18 refers to the idols which will be worthless. In verse 19 it is said that men will hide themselves from the wrath of God in caves and clefts of rocks rather than themselves. Only in verse 20 the idols will be thrown away.

<sup>14</sup> Lightfoot has recently shown this for other paragraphs in Sib. Or. 3. Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 230ff.

Isaiah's polemics aim at the fact that images are made by men.<sup>15</sup> The Sibyl has the images of the Greeks and Romans in mind that were current at the time<sup>16</sup> whereas Isaiah condemns the images made by the Israelites. Again, the Sibyl reverses a prophecy that was once directed at the Israelites and turns it against the nations. However, she also bears in mind that the nations can be saved if they abandon their idolatry. They will do so during the reign of the seventh king of Egypt when a king from Asia will ravage Egypt because of this (608-618). As we have seen already, the reign of the seventh king designates a period in which a turn of events will be brought about. The Sibyl accuses the nations of idolatry based on her euhemeristic account of the theogony.<sup>17</sup> The punishment of the idol worshippers is the setting for the prophecy about the seventh young king of Egypt or rather the reign of the seventh king is the temporal setting for judgement (601f) and redemption (616-618). The prophecy about the seventh king is framed by lines 601-607 and 616-618 respectively.

## 7.4 The seventh reign of Egypt and a king from Asia (608-623)

### 7.4.1 The seventh reign of Egypt (608-610)

608 ὁπότεν Αἰγύπτου βασιλεὺς νέος ἑβδομος ἄρχη  
 609 τῆς ἰδίης γαίης ἀριθμούμενος ἐξ Ἑλλήνων  
 610 ἀρχῆς, ἧς ἄρξουσιν Μακεδόνες ἄσπετοι ἄνδρες·

When the seventh young king of Egypt will reign  
 over his land, counted from the reign of the Greeks,  
 which the Macedonians, unspeakably great men, will begin.

The passage is intersected by a prophecy on the seventh king of Egypt. The sentence is introduced by the temporal conjunction ὁπότεν (when) subordinating the clause to the main clause starting in line 601 thus indicating that the event described will occur during the reign of the seventh reign of the young (or new) king of Egypt.<sup>18</sup> Though it forms a thematically separate entity the passage is still grammatically dependent on the previous lines.

The repetition of the root ἄρχω in this passage is noteworthy. It occurs in line 608 (ἄρχη) and two times in line 610 (ἀρχῆς, ἄρξουσιν). The repetition is no coincidence. The Sibyl is stressing the subject of rule. She enumerates the new or young seventh king of Egypt from the Greek rule, which the Macedonians began. Alternatively, it could be understood that the Macedonians reigned over Egypt if the subordinate clause in line 610 refers to the land in line

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Isa 40:19; 41:7; 44:6-20; 45:20; 46:1-7.

<sup>16</sup> Jewish aversion to images is attested by Philo and Josephus, who record the reaction of Jews all over the world to Caligula's attempted erection of his statue in the temple. Philo, Flacc. 43-46; Legat. 203; Josephus, B.J. 2.168, 195; see also Part III: the common law.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 163 cf. lines 551-554.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 264.

608 rather than the reign of the Greeks in line 609. Whereas in the previous passages on the seventh reign, the Sibyl was referring to a king, she is referring to the rule in the section at hand.

Due to the references to the Greek and Macedonian rule, Buitenwerf suggested taking the Ptolemaic dynasty as a chronological reference whereas Collins points to a specific Ptolemaic king.<sup>19</sup> I propose that the number seven points to an undisclosed future (cf. comment on lines 158b-195).<sup>20</sup> In lines 193 and 318 no reference to a specific historical event can be identified. In line 318 we find a temporal dative announcing rest for Egypt in the seventh generation of kings. Line 193 is introduced by the temporal word ἄχρι (until). Here, the passage on the king is introduced by ὁπότε. The denominator 'seventh' is used in all three passages on the Egyptian king of Greek descent, i.e. in line 192, 318 and here. This suggests that the Sibyl is referring to the same time indeed. However, for her that time is somewhere in the nearer future. Since the oracle is evidently *ex eventu*, the Sibyl cannot have the historical Philometor in mind, just as she does not think of the historical Cyrus in her prediction about the king from the east in line 652 below.

What does the temporal reference to the seventh king or reign mean? The seventh reign serves as a temporal setting for the people of God to be moral guides for all mortals (lines 194-195). This points even more to the fact that the number seven conveys symbolic meaning. Why an Egyptian king of Greek descent? Buitenwerf suggests that the Ptolemies were the last stable dynasty in the Mediterranean during the first century BCE when most of the book was compiled.<sup>21</sup> The oracles about the Egyptian king are not about the king but about the period in which he will reign. Something is said to happen during his reign. The seventh king or reign marks a period of calamities for Egypt (318) via the advent of an Asian king who will overthrow Egypt and lead to a mass-conversion (608ff)<sup>22</sup>. In line 193, the seventh reign gives the setting for the future role of the people of God. In the Sibyl's case, however, the seventh reign is no messianic age.<sup>23</sup> In line 193, the seventh reign follows that of Rome wherefore the historical Philometor cannot be the focus here (but rather a general reference to the Ptolemaic dynasty).

The role of the seventh king can be illuminated by his relation to the prophecy about the advent of an Asian king in lines 611-15. Collin's proposed positive attitude to Egypt is

<sup>19</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 265; Collins, 2005, 92-94.

<sup>20</sup> For the number seven cf. Gen 2:2; 41; Exod 12:15-16; 16:26; 13:5; Num 19:2; Deut 5:14; 1 En. 91:12-17; 93:3-10 (apocalypse of weeks, the turning point of history will occur in the seventh week of years). See also: Yarbo Collins, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 189.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. lines 710-731.

<sup>23</sup> Contra Collins, 2000, 95.

weakened by the reference to the Asian king in line 611-15 who is said to come and ravage Egypt.

#### 7.4.2 The king from Asia (611-615)

611 ἔλθῃ δ' ἐξ Ἀσίας βασιλεὺς μέγας, αἰετὸς αἴθων,  
 612 ὃς πᾶσαν σκεπάσει γαῖαν πεζῶν τε καὶ ἱππέων,  
 613 πάντα δὲ συγκόψει καὶ πάντα κακῶν ἀναπλήσει·  
 614 ῥίψει δ' Αἰγύπτου βασιλῆιον ἐκ δέ τε πάντα  
 615 κτήμαθ' ἐλὼν ἐποχεῖται ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης.

A great king will come from Asia, a blazing eagle  
 who will cover the whole land with cavalry and infantry  
 He will cut everything into pieces and fill it up with evils.  
 He will overthrow the kingdom of Egypt.  
 He will take all its possessions and ride on the broad back of the sea.

The verb ἔλθῃ still depends on ὁππότεν in line 608 so the Sibyl is still referring to the same time frame.<sup>24</sup> The Asian king will come during the reign of the seventh king of Egypt. The Asian king is described as a αἰετὸς αἴθων (blazing eagle) which may refer to the speed with which he will come over Egypt.<sup>25</sup> However, the eagle was normally the typical coin reverse of the Ptolemaic dynasty.<sup>26</sup> The designation μέγας also points to a Hellenistic ruler. The Asian king is a harbinger of judgment for Egypt.

The Asian king is said to fill everything up with evil. Line 613 is identical with line 188 where it was used as a description of the Romans and their conquest of the east. It describes the character of war, which the Sibyl depicts as altogether evil<sup>27</sup>. It is possible to see it as a description of the devastating impact that the king will have on Egypt. The term κακός in the Third Sibyl can refer to either immoral behaviour<sup>28</sup> or can be used as a reference to the disasters that a nation or a person inflicts on their subjects.<sup>29</sup> In lines 235-236, for instance, it is described as war and famine.

Lines 613 and 188 are certainly dependent on each other. It is likely that 188 was borrowed from 613 supposed the oracle was written some time after the sixth Syrian War. On the other hand, both lines may be the invention of a compiler. The question cannot sufficiently be resolved.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 265.

<sup>25</sup> In Homer, Il. 15.690 Hector's speed is compared to that of a blazing eagle (αἰετὸς αἴθων).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. McGing, 1986, 96.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. lines 154-55.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. lines 204, 380, 553, 661.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 266.

In light of the lines 601-607, the Sibyl sees the conquest of the Asian king as punishment for Egypt's idolatry, like the coming of Rome was punishment of the hubristic Greek kings. The historical reminiscence to Antiochus IV has dissolved into a prediction about a harbinger of judgement. The portrayal of the Asian king is not biased which can be deduced from the fact that there will be no judgement for him while the Romans, who will fill up everything with evil, are repeatedly a target of divine retribution. The Asian king simply fades from view. We can therefore conclude that he is an instrument of God to punish the Egyptian idolaters.

In line 618, it is said that all the handmade works (ἔργα δὲ χειροποίητα) will fall into the fire. It is obvious that by that the Sibyl is referring to idols because in line 605f the Egyptian idolaters are called εἰδῶλα δ' ἐτίμων χειροποίητα σέβοντες. The criticism of Egyptian idolatry, specifically animal worship, is a common theme in Jewish literature in the Second Temple Period.<sup>30</sup>

The Asian king will cast down the Egyptian kingdom.<sup>31</sup> The verb ῥίπτω has already occurred in line 606 with regard to the idolaters who would cast their idols into caves. There is certainly a connection here. The Sibyl looks to the age of the seventh king of Egypt as a period of calamities for Egypt. In lines 314-318, the period of the seventh dynasty was also one of misery for Egypt. There it was said that only after that period of misery would it have temporary rest. This implies that the author is referring to the same period here and there.<sup>32</sup> It is also the period in which the people of God will be examples for all mankind (192-195). The Asian king will be the harbinger of judgment for Egypt which cause the destruction of idols and conversion to God. This matches the notion of the people of God being moral guides for the rest of mankind in lines 194-195.

The political role of Asian dominion is expressed elsewhere in the book, most prominently in lines 350ff.<sup>33</sup> In both passages, an Asian avenger is an instrument of punishment. While lines 350ff are aimed at Rome, the Asian king in the section at hand will punish Egypt. Eventually, God will establish his divine dominion on earth. This is what the Sibyl ultimately looks to.

The king will 'ride on the broad back of the sea' (ἐποχεῖται ὑπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης). The phrasing itself is borrowed from Homer.<sup>34</sup> It can either mean that the king will sail away from

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Josephus, C. Ap 2.128ff.

<sup>31</sup> βασιλῆϊος is Ionian for βασιλεία, βασιλείος (LSJ, "βασιλῆϊς," 309).

<sup>32</sup> Note that in lines 314-18 the passage probably is a later addition. See comments there.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 266ff.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 2.159; 10.330; Od. 3.142.

Egypt carrying its riches<sup>35</sup> or simply his return to Asia. Sailing from Egypt to Asia would be the obvious decision for a king from Asia.

From the way the Asian king is described he is a harbinger of judgement. This is particularly evident from line 613 where he is described in the same terms as the Romans in line 188. However, in contrast to the other manifold nations in Sib. Or. 3, this king does not receive a negative assessment.<sup>36</sup> The passage on the Asian king lacks a moral denominator. The purpose of the passage is entirely different; the king is an instrument of God to punish the Egyptian idolaters.

#### 7.4.3 Mass conversion and foreshadows of the divine dominion, the dawn of the Golden Age (616-623)

616 καὶ τότε δὴ κάμψουσι θεῷ μεγάλῳ βασιλῇ  
 617 ἀθανάτῳ γόνυ λευκὸν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ·  
 618 ἔργα δὲ χειροποίητα πυρὸς φλογὶ πάντα πεσεῖται.  
 619 καὶ τότε δὴ χάρμην μεγάλην θεὸς ἀνδράσι δώσει·  
 620 καὶ γὰρ γῆ καὶ δένδρα καὶ ἄσπετα ποίμνια μῆλων  
 621 δώσουσιν καρπὸν τὸν ἀληθινὸν ἀνθρώποισιν  
 622 οἴνου καὶ μέλιτος γλυκεροῦ λευκοῦ τε γάλακτος  
 623 καὶ σίτου, ὅπερ ἐστὶ βροτοῖς κάλλιστον ἀπάντων.

Then they will bend a white knee to the great God,  
 the immortal king, on the all nourishing ground,  
 but all handmade work will fall into a flame of fire.  
 And then, God will give great joy to men,  
 and the earth, the trees and the countless flock of sheep  
 will give the true fruit to men  
 of wine, sweet honey, white milk,  
 and grain, which is the best of everything for mortals.

The phrase καὶ τότε δὴ + future tense introduces a new passage. The coming of the Asian king will lead to a ‘mass conversion’ (lines 618-623). After the king from Asia has cast down Egypt (καὶ τότε δὴ + future), all the people will bend their knee to God<sup>37</sup> and the handmade works of men will be cast into the fire (616-18)<sup>38</sup>. Following the destruction of Egypt and the throwing away of idols God will cause a peaceful period for men giving them great joy (χάρμη μεγάλη). The abandonment of idolatry signifies entering into relations with God.

The giving of great joy (χάρμη μεγάλη) is reminiscent of line 583-590 where the people of God are said to be great joy for all mortals because they possess and keep the law and do not

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 266.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the depiction of the Romans in lines 184-186 or that of the Greek kings in 202-204 et al.

<sup>37</sup> The expression ‘to go down on one’s knee’ occurs repeatedly in biblical writings as a metaphor for praying. Cf. 1 Chr 29:30; 3 Macc 2:1; Isa 45:23; Rom 11:3; 14:11; Eph 3:14; Phil 2:11.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Isa 37:19.

honour the works of men (see comment there). Again, this also matches the roles of the people of God laid out in lines 192-196. The destruction of idolatry and the mass conversion will bring about a peaceful period. In this peaceful period (the age of the divine dominion), God will give great joy (χάρμην μεγάλην) to the people (619).<sup>39</sup> The author intended the allusion to line 583 and is thus referring to the same period and the role of the pious in it accordingly.

That period will include abundance and fertility for the people.<sup>40</sup> These descriptions are reminiscent of biblical depictions of paradisiacal times but also to Greco-Roman depictions of the golden age.<sup>41</sup> The description figuratively speaks of a land flowing with milk and honey.<sup>42</sup> It is the foreshadowing of the utopian conditions of the divine dominion.<sup>43</sup> Once again, the coming age of the divine dominion holds central place and drives the entire passage.

It shows that the passage is closely linked to lines 601-7, where idolatry is condemned and the idols will ultimately be destroyed wherefore it is safe to assume that the condemnation of idolatry is aimed at the Egyptians. ‘The Sibyl predicts catastrophe for Egyptian idolaters, laid low by the hand of God through the agency of an Asian conqueror, and then redeemed when they prostrate themselves before the true Immortal.’<sup>44</sup>

#### 7.4.4 Historical allusions

The Asian invader is often identified with Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the young Egyptian king with Ptolemy Philometor, who ruled Egypt at that time.<sup>45</sup> Antiochus invaded Egypt twice in 170-168 BCE and in his second attempt he was called back by the Romans. Some of the Seleucid kings put the title ruler of Asia on their coins which makes the identification possible.

Gruen, on the other hand, has suggested to separate the passage from historical references altogether.<sup>46</sup> Threats to Egypt from Asia were endemic in Egyptian lore and the Sibyl may pick up on that circumstance.<sup>47</sup> Rather than trying to find historical identifications for the

<sup>39</sup> Cf. 1 En. 10:18f; 2 Bar 29.5.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. lines 367-380, 659b-660a, 741-761, 767-795.

<sup>41</sup> Ovid, Met. 1.109-112. See also comments on lines 744-756.

<sup>42</sup> Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 20:24; Num 13:27; 16:13-14; Deut 6:3; 11:9; 26:9-10, 15; 27:3; 31:20; Josh 5:6; Jer 11:5; 39:22; Ezek 20:6, 15; Sir 46:8; Bar 1:20.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. lines 744-757a where similar descriptions of the Golden Age can be found. The passage there also follows a prediction of judgement. This is a recurring pattern in the Third Book (cf. also lines 367-372).

<sup>44</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998b, 21.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998b, 22.

<sup>47</sup> In 533 BCE Cambyses conquered Egypt and maintained control there up until 404. In 343 Artaxerxes III reconquered the land and maintained control until the advent of Alexander the Great in 322 BCE. ‘Egyptian memory of this period, exacerbated by Greek propaganda, recalls Persian rule as extremely harsh and irreligious’



kings the references to them should be understood in light of the structure of the book as a whole. The seventh kingdom or king of Egypt is a chronological marker setting the events described into a time frame of a not clearer defined future period which will be at some time while the Ptolemaic dynasty is still intact. This reflects on the author's time of living. The seventh king is, however, no messianic saviour figure that symbolises a favourable attitude towards the Ptolemies or to Egypt.<sup>48</sup> There is no hope for the seventh king expressed in the verses in question.<sup>49</sup> On the contrary, Egypt will be ravaged by an Asian king and the Egyptian king is not mentioned again, he just disappears. Nothing is said about the seventh king's actions and no moral judgement is passed. In each case (lines 193, 318, 608) the seventh king or reign is but a time frame for something else to happen, i.e. a temporary cessation of war and judgement in which the people of God are allotted a role as moral guides for mankind (cf. lines 194-195) which will be fulfilled after the advent of the king from Asia that will ravage Egypt in the seventh generation (lines 608-23).

The Asian king, on the other hand, is an instrument of God. By destroying the Egyptian kingdom he becomes the harbinger of a temporary peaceful period (619-23). Moreover, scholars until Gruen have overlooked the fact that no ancient source enumerates the Ptolemaic kings. Hence, we cannot expect that the number seven would make the reader think of a specific Ptolemy.<sup>50</sup> Gruen has convincingly pointed out that the number seven holds high symbolic value for the Jews and that it would be inaccurate to apply it to one of the Ptolemaic kings.

However, this is not to say that the oracle contains no historical allusions at all. The 'original' prediction about the seventh reign in line 608 is an *ex eventu* prophecy about the sixth Syrian War and provides a setting for future events heralded by the Sibyl, such as the punishment of the idolaters and the establishment of the divine dominion. The reminiscence of the sixth Syrian War serves as a setting for a future punishment for Egypt's idolatry. This requires some elaboration.

#### **Excursus: The Cologne Papyrus**

That the oracle concerning the seventh king of Egypt and the king from Asia is, to a certain extent, an *ex eventu* prophecy about the events surrounding the Sixth Syrian War (170-168) has long been observed by scholars.<sup>51</sup> The seventh reign of Egypt would

---

(Barclay, 2007, 235 n. 486). Cf. Diodorus Siculus, 1.44.3; Herodotus, Hist. 3.16-18, 27-29, 37-38; Strabo, Geogr. 17.1.27; Plutarch, Is. Os. 368f; Pompeius Trogus apud Justin, 19.1-6.

<sup>48</sup> Contra Collins, 1974, 29-30; 39-40.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998b, 21.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998, 22.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Kocsis, 1962, 109; Gauger, 1998, 501; Merkel, 2003, 1101 n. 611 a. Collins weakens this aspect: 'The present passage may be influenced by the relatively recent memory of Antiochus, but should be taken as a more general reference.' (Collins, 1984a, 375 n. v3).

either be that of Ptolemy VI Philometor or Ptolemy VIII Physcon and the Asian King would be none other than Antiochus IV Epiphanes who invaded Egypt twice only to be called out by the Romans on the second attempt. In Jewish history Antiochus is chiefly known for plundering the Temple of Jerusalem on his way back.<sup>52</sup> Philometor's benevolence towards the Jews of Egypt is well attested.<sup>53</sup> Philometor was sixteen at the time wherefore the description νέος is fitting (608).

The recent publication of a papyrus in *Papyrologica Coloniensis* supports this dating.<sup>54</sup> The papyrus contains 15 verses written in hexameter that were partially known from a papyrus in Oslo which scholars have for a long time related to the Sibylline Oracles.<sup>55</sup> The newly uncovered papyrus from Cologne helps to unveil the damaged verses on the Oslo papyrus.<sup>56</sup> The two papyri present the same text with a few variants, which is not surprising as the Oslo Papyrus was written approximately 300 years after the Cologne Papyrus.<sup>57</sup> The Cologne papyrus can be dated to the second century BCE.<sup>58</sup> It contains a poetic oracle in 15 verses of hexameter. The oracle reconstructed from the two papyri is an ex eventu oracle about the Macedonian rulers in Egypt up until the Syrian War of 170-168 BCE and the invasion of Antiochus IV. The oracle contains no verbatim correspondence to Sib. Or. 3 but it is evident that it is the same type of oracle (namely Sibylline).<sup>59</sup> It is probably of Jewish origin as can be deduced from verses 1-4 (only on Pap. Oslo) which contain an oracle against idolatry.<sup>60</sup> However, these lines are damaged so that only a few words are legible.<sup>61</sup> The supposed polemics against idolatry can only be derived from the word ἀψύχ[ος] (lifeless, inanimate) which can also be found in Sib. Or. 5.84 where it refers to idols.<sup>62</sup> If this holds water, the invasion of Egypt on the papyrus fragment is divine punishment for idolatry just like it is in lines 615-619 of the Third Sibyl. Verses 13-15 (17-19 Pap. Oslo) of the papyrus show a pejorative attitude towards the Egyptians (and possibly their idolatry).

The papyrus furthermore helps to shed light on the elusive young seventh king of Egypt who is repeatedly mentioned in the Third Sibyl. The oracle in the papyrus lists several rulers without giving their names: it speaks of a lion<sup>63</sup> that will reign first (ἄρξει πρῶτα λέων), the fifth (πέμπτος) that will have no name (ἄνώνυμος)<sup>64</sup>, a woman that will reign (probably Cleopatra), and a child (παῖς) that will reign after her. The oracle then turns to a hubristic ruler (κοίρανος ὑβριστής) that will raise up the strife (ἔρις) of Zeus and war. The Egyptians will then remember their flight (φυγή) while most

<sup>52</sup> 1 Macc 1:17-29; 2 Macc 5:1, 11-21.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Josephus, C. Ap. 2.49; Ant. 13.62-80; 2 Macc 1:10.

<sup>54</sup> P.Köln Inv. 20380 R. Editio Princeps: Gronewald, 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Gauger, 1998, 367 n. 55. Editio princeps Wilhem Crönert, "Oraculorum Sibyllinorum Fragmentum Osloense," *Symbolae Osloenses* 6 (1928): 57-58.

<sup>56</sup> P.Oslo II 14, second century CE. Examples for pagan Sibylline fragments can be found in Alexandre, 1856.

<sup>57</sup> Gronewald, 2010, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Gronewald, 2010, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Gronewald, 2010, 3. Crönert was the first to relate the oracle to the Sibyl (Crönert, 1928, 58).

<sup>60</sup> „Der jüdische Hintergrund wird nahegelegt durch die ersten Verse des Papyrus, die sich in einer Digression gegen heidnische Opferpraxis und Götzendienst zu richten scheinen.“ Gronewald, 2010, 3.

<sup>61</sup> [...]... ἐν Ἀργείων [...] κατ' Αἴγυπτον .. [...]σιν καὶ ἐν ἀψύχ[...].σαι τε θεῶν ε ..

<sup>62</sup> Cf. also Sib. Or. 3.554 and 588.

<sup>63</sup> Lions are typical imagery of rulers ever since the Archemenides. According to Plutarch (Alex. 40.3f) Alexander battled a great lion (Darius). In relation to the Persian king, the lion usually represented the zodiac sign whose true role is unfolded in relation to the sun. By the time of Alexander the image was adapted into the imagery of the Hellenistic rulers. In Herodotus, Hist. 5.92b.3 a lion announces the birth of a ruler, cf. Aristophanes, Eq. 1037. In Sib. Or. 11.215 and 290 a lion designates a ruler. Cf. also Lycophron, Alexandra, 1441 for Alexander the Great. According to Gronewald, 2010, 10 the reference here is not to Alexander but to Ptolemy I because ἔτερος refers to Ptolemy II. He acknowledges, however, that the lion imagery may be of Egyptian influence. It is a known fact, that the Ptolemies drew on Hellenistic as well as on Pharaonic imagery. That the lion is a symbol for rule is also attested in the Bible (cf. Gen 49:9; Deut 33:20, 23; 2 Sam 1:23; Num 23:24; 24:9; Isa 31:4; Hos 5:14; Dan 7:3; Rev 4:7; 5:5). Be that as it may, the reference here is with all likelihood to a Hellenistic ruler.

<sup>64</sup> I.e. he will not be loved by the people.

Egyptians will be killed during the flight.<sup>65</sup> The oracle contains but contextual parallels to lines 608-615 of Sib. Or. 3. However, supposed the oracle is indeed of Jewish origin from second century BCE Egypt it proves what has long been assumed by most scholars, namely that lines 608-615 contain reminiscences to an older, possibly non-Jewish oracle from second century BCE Egypt. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the core of Sib. Or. 3 was written there and then but that it had a precursor.<sup>66</sup> If we relate the papyrus to lines 608-615 of the Third Sibyl, Philometor would indeed be the seventh young king of Egypt of Greek decent. Nonetheless, most of Sib. Or. 3 was not compiled until the first century BCE, approximately one hundred years after the sixth Syrian War. It can therefore not be said with certainty when the oracle in the Third Sibyl was written. It is safe to assume, however, that the two other predictions about the seventh king of Egypt were composed in light of lines 608-615. The papyrus shows that (Jewish) Sibylline oracles did circulate long before the establishment of the collection we now have. The Syrian war provides the *terminus post quem* for the oldest strata of Sib. Or. 3. The predictions surrounding the seventh king, however, are a literary transformation based on these events. Even though Philometor may be the historical seventh king, the Sibyl's seventh king is to be expected in the Roman period as we have seen in line 193 and 318 respectively. Whereas line 608 contains allusions to actual historical events and combines them with a sin-punishment scheme (and a mass-conversion), lines 193 and 318 simply serve as a setting, a time frame in which the Sibyl expects her oracles to be fulfilled (see comments there). Egypt is not necessarily the origin of the rest of the book. For the Sibyl, the seventh reign designates the period in which the people of God will be strong again and be guides in life for all mortals (194-195). That this will be in the Roman period has become clear from the related passages.<sup>67</sup>

Aside from the references to the sixth Syrian War the oracle contains another feature known from Sib. Or. 3, namely, the succession of rule. In Gronewald's reconstruction of the two papyri, a possible succession of rule in Egypt containing Medes, Egypt and Macedonia can be discerned.<sup>68</sup>

In the remainder of the third book, the Greeks seem to be the intended addressees. A positive attitude towards Egypt cannot be discerned in my opinion. By the time that the Third Sibyl was written the events surrounding Philometor were but memories of the past so that the young seventh king of Egypt is allotted a new role in a not too distant future.

#### 7.4.5 Conclusion

The punishment of the idolaters in lines 601-7 and the coming of the Asian king during the seventh reign of Egypt and the mass conversion it will bring about (608-623) evidently focus on idolatry. The two passages are modelled upon each other. In lines 601-607 the idolater are contrasted with the people of God who are embellished in lines 573-600 (see comment there). The retribution of the idolaters is set in the seventh reign of Egypt which matches the statement made in lines 193-195, that the people of God would be guides in life for all mortals during the seventh reign. The seventh reign is the Sibyl's setting for the role of the

<sup>65</sup> Cf. 1 Macc 1:18: ... And Ptolemy was afraid of him (Antiochus) and fled, and many were wounded and fell.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Gronewald, 2010, 4: „Der Kölner und der Osloer Papyrus bieten den Beweis einer Rezension von Orakeln, die unabhängig ist von derjenigen der or. Sib. Und mit Sicherheit bereits im zweiten Jahrhundert vor Chr. vorgelegen und sich wenigstens bis ins zweite Jahrhundert nach Chr. erhalten hat.“

<sup>67</sup> See according comments.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Gronewald, 2010, 8-10.

people of God as moral guides, divine retribution of the idolaters, and conversion to the true king once judgement has come to pass. The Egyptian kingdom will be destroyed because of its idolatry and immoral behaviour and only redeemed when the Egyptians convert to God. The king from Asia is merely an agent of God and a literary creation of the Sibyllist.<sup>69</sup> The compiler of Sib. Or. 3 looks to these events in the near future, probably in his own lifetime. The passage is in consonance with other passages concerning the Egyptian dynasty and the future role of the people of God (192-93, 314-18, 652-656).<sup>70</sup>

The evaluation of idolatry is continued here and is once more the crossroads of judgement and salvation. The passage looks ahead to the smashing of idolatry, the transformation of the earth, conversion, and redemption. ‘A narrow political interpretation would be simplistic and distorting.’<sup>71</sup>

On the horizontal line the sixth Syrian War provides the *terminus post quem* for the prediction about the seventh king of Egypt. On the vertical line, however, it provides the setting when God will punish the idolaters at the hands of an Asian king and the people of God will be moral guides via their obedience to the law.

Again, it comes to the fore that kingdoms and dominion mean nothing if the people do not heed the law of God. Again, the passage is closely related to the role of the people of God on the vertical line. Destruction and punishment await the idolaters but also eventual redemption and salvation should they convert to God. In the next passage, the Sibyl admonishes them to do so. The vertical and horizontal lines draw to their conclusion.

## 7.5 Second Admonition (624-634)

624 ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ μέλλων, βροτὲ ποικιλόμητι, βράδυνε  
 625 ἀλλὰ παλίμπλαγκτος στρέψας θεὸν ἰλάσκοιο.<sup>72</sup>  
 626 θῦε θεῷ ταύρων ἑκατοντάδας ἥδὲ καὶ ἄρνῶν  
 627 πρωτοτόκων αἰγῶν τε περιπλομέναισιν ἐν ὥραις.  
 628 ἀλλὰ μιν ἰλάσκου, θεὸν ἄμβροτον, αἵ κ' ἐλεήση.  
 629 αὐτὸς γὰρ μόνος ἐστὶ θεὸς κοῦκ ἔστιν ἕτ' ἄλλος.<sup>73</sup>  
 630 τὴν δὲ δικαιοσύνην τίμα καὶ μηδένα θλίβε.  
 631 ταῦτα γὰρ ἀθάνατος κέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.

<sup>69</sup> Nickiprowetzky and Gruen therefore suggested reading the passage in light of the thundering of Isaiah 2:18-21 and 30:22-24 (Nickiprowetzky, 1970, 208; cf. Gruen, 1998b, 22). See also comment on lines 601-676 above.

<sup>70</sup> It should be noted that the oracle in 314-318 is out of place because it disturbs the sequence there. I believe it was inserted at this point because it matches the idea of oracles of doom against various nations (see comment there). The decisive passages on the seventh reign deal with the role of the people of God as moral guides and divine retribution.

<sup>71</sup> Gruen, 1998b, 22.

<sup>72</sup> Lines 626-627 are not discussed for reasons of scope.

<sup>73</sup> The line in question resembles Deut 4:35. The entire passage is quoted in Clement of Alexandria, Protr. 7.74. It recurs in line 760. See also Part III: The image of God.

632 ἀλλὰ σὺ τοῦ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ μήνιμα<sup>74</sup> φύλαξαι,  
 633 ὅπποτε κεν πάντεσσι βροτοῖς λοιμοῖο τελευτή  
 634 ἔλθῃ καὶ φοβεροῖο δίκης τετύχωσι δαμέντες,

But you, wily-minded mortal, do not tarry, do not slow down,  
 but turn back, convert and appease God.  
 Sacrifice to God hundreds of bulls and first-born  
 lambs, and goats at regular times.  
 But appease him, the immortal God, so that he may have mercy.  
 For he is the only God and there is no other.  
 Honour righteousness and oppress no one.  
 For these are the things that the Immortal has commanded to miserable mortals.  
 But guard yourself against the wrath of the great God,  
 when the end for all mortals of famine  
 will come and they are subdued and meet with terrible justice.

In line 624 a new passage starts. This is evident from the fact that the Sibyl switches back to the second person singular, addressing the reader as a human of wily mind (βροτὲ ποικιλόμητι). The Sibyl does not exemplify who exactly this mortal is but it becomes clear that he stands for mankind as a whole because in the following lines he is admonished to turn and convert (στρέφω) to God.

In light of the previous passage it seems obvious that the addressees are the idolaters. Instead of worshipping idols and sacrificing to them they are admonished to turn, appease and sacrifice to God so that he may be merciful. The nations are now included in the Sibyl's salvation scheme. They too have a position on the vertical line.

The admonition closes with a warning to guard oneself against the wrath of God when men are met with justice (δίκη). Anyone who does not recognise this fact will be subject to God's judgement. In the passage at hand, δίκη implies punishment.<sup>75</sup> Pestilence (λοιμός) is a common term with regard to judgement in the Third Sibyl.<sup>76</sup>

## 7.6 Cataclysmic events (635-651)

The admonition is succeeded by a chain of eschatological woes that will come to an end when God will send a king from the East. Much of what is said in lines 635-651 is reminiscent of previous passages and of biblical imagery. Lines 635-36 contain traditional eschatological imagery of kings seizing kings and taking their lands which is a description of cataclysmic warfare.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 22.358; Od. 11.73 and frg. 3.9, 556, 561, 766, 811.

<sup>75</sup> This usage is paralled in Acts 25:15; 28:4; 2 Thess 1:9; Jude 7.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.266, 332, 538, 567, 603.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Isa 19:2; Matt 24:6f; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10.

635 καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλῆα λάβῃ χώραν τ' ἀφέλῃται,  
 636 ἔθνη δ' ἔθνεα πορθήσῃ καὶ φύλα δυνάσται,  
 637 ἡγεμόνες δὲ φύγωσιν ἐς ἄλλην γαῖαν ἅπαντες,  
 638 ἀλλαχθῇ δέ τε γαῖα βροτῶν καὶ βάρβαρος ἀρχή  
 639 Ἑλλάδα πορθήσῃ πᾶσαν καὶ πῖονα γαῖαν  
 640 ἐξάρύσῃ πλούτοιο καὶ ἀντίον εἰς ἔριν αὐτῶν  
 641 ἔλθωσιν χρυσοῦ τε καὶ ἀργύρου εἵνεκεν· ἔσται  
 642 ἡ φιλοχρημοσύνη κακὰ ποιμαίνουσα πόλεσσιν.  
 643 χώρα ἑν ἀλλοτρίῃ, ἄταφοι δὲ ἅπαντες ἔσονται,  
 644 καὶ τῶν μὲν γῦπές τε καὶ ἄγρια θηρία γαίης  
 645 σάρκας δηλήσονται· ἐπὶ δὴ ταῦτα τελεσθῇ,  
 646 λείψανα γαῖα πέλωρος ἀναλώσειε θανόντων.  
 647 αὐτὴ δ' ἄσπαρτος καὶ ἀνήροτος ἔσται ἅπασα  
 648 κηρύσσουσα τάλαινα μύσος μυρίων ἀνθρώπων·  
 649 πολλὰ χρόνων μήκη περιτελλομένων ἐνιαυτῶν  
 651 πέλτας καὶ θυρεοὺς γαισοὺς παμποίκιλά θ' ὄπλα·  
 652 οὐδὲ μὲν ἐκ δρυμοῦ ξύλα κόπεται εἰς πυρὸς αὐγήν.

King will seize king and take away territory,  
 people will ravage peoples and tribes rulers,  
 all leaders will flee to another country,  
 a change will be unto the land of mortals and a foreign rule  
 will sack all Greece, and drain the rich  
 land of its wealth, and they will march against each other  
 in strife because of gold and silver.  
 Love of gain will lead cities to misery.  
 They will all lie unburied in a foreign earth,  
 and vultures and wild beasts will  
 ravage their flesh. When this has come to an end,  
 the monstrous earth will digest the remains of the dead.  
 And the earth itself will remain unsown and unploughed.  
 Wretched it will proclaim the defilement of countless men.  
 For many lengths of yearly recurring times  
 light shields, longs shields, javelins and diverse weapons  
 and not even wood will be cut from a thicket for the flame of the fire.<sup>78</sup>

The Sibyl is highlighting that the hubristic kings will fight each other and try to take each other's territory. Her focus is once more on the avarice of the kingdoms of men. The vicious circle of war over world dominion continues. It is said that the leaders (ἡγεμόνες) will have to flee to another country (637). The topos of being forced to flee one's country in line 636-637 has already been mentioned in lines 511 and 525 (refer to comments there).

In lines 638-39 Greece is mentioned explicitly and it is said that it will be ravaged by a βάρβαρος ἀρχή, a barbarous (or foreign) rule. In line 520 a πολὺ βάρβαρον ἔθνος was said to come over Greece and cause much disaster. Lines 638-39 may refer to the same event.<sup>79</sup> The

<sup>78</sup> Anacoluthon (no verb).

<sup>79</sup> It is possible to identify a historical reminiscence to the Roman invasion of Greece in 168 BCE.

Barbarians will drain the land of its wealth.<sup>80</sup> The taking of a nation's wealth is a favourite topic of the Third Sibyl and a usual practice in warfare. Other than in lines 350ff it does, however, not necessarily refer to a historical event. The taking of the wealth will cause people to strive about gold and silver. Love of money (φιλοχρημοσύνη) is likewise a common theme of the Sibyl.<sup>81</sup> Avarice is an integral part of the hubristic kingdoms and one of the things that will lead them to their downfall.

The remainder of the passage seems to be closely modelled on lines 520-544 and may be part of an originally anti-Hellenistic oracle which either was Jewish to begin with or received Jewish redaction.<sup>82</sup> Lines 649-51 probably are an interpolation and recur in lines 728-31.<sup>83</sup> The land itself will proclaim the wretchedness (μύσος) of its people. The nations are judged by moral standards; it is because of idolatry, warfare, and avarice that they shall be punished.

### 7.7 The king from the east (652-656)

652 καὶ τότε ἅπ' ἡελίοιο θεὸς πέμψει βασιλῆα,  
 653 ὃς πᾶσαν γαῖαν παύσει πολέμοιο κακοῖο,  
 654 οὗς μὲν ἄρα κτείνας, οἷς δ' ὄρκια πιστὰ τελέσσας.  
 655 οὐδέ γε ταῖς ἰδίαις βουλαῖς τάδε πάντα ποιήσει,  
 656 ἀλλὰ θεοῦ μέγαλοιο πιθήσας δόγμασιν ἐσθλοῖς.

And then God will send a king from the east  
 who will give the entire earth rest from evil war  
 by killing some and making treatise with others.  
 He will not do all these things by his own will  
 but trusting the noble orders of the great God.

The phrase καὶ τότε + future in line 652 marks the beginning of a new section and of a new event within the Sibyl's time frame. God will send a king from the east who will give the entire earth rest from war. The king from the east will be the harbinger of a peaceful period. After the cataclysmic events God will send a king from the east to put an end to war, slaying some and binding others by oath. The king described in lines 652-656 has received much attention from scholars. In the passage the Sibyl's debt to pagan as well as Jewish sources is particularly visible.<sup>84</sup> Collins in particular has been advocating that the passage describes a Ptolemaic king that God will send from the sun and to whom the author of the Third Sibyl looks to as a messianic figure. He identifies the king with the seventh young king of Egypt

<sup>80</sup> Cf. 270, 532-33.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. lines 189, 204-5, 234-36, 638.

<sup>82</sup> In line 647 the Sibyl repeats the prediction that the earth will be unsown and unploughed that was already made in 542 with regard to Greece.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Geffcken, 1902, 81; Gauger, 1998, 103; Buitenwerf, 2003, 272; Merkel, 2003, 1102 n. 648 a.

<sup>84</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 238.

(see above). According to Collins the sun imagery is taken from the Oracle of the Potter, a demotic oracle from the third century BCE<sup>85</sup>, where Isis appoints a king from the sun (actually from Helios/Re)<sup>86</sup> to end a period of foreign rule.<sup>87</sup> According to Collins the Jews of Egypt have made use of traditional motifs in Egyptian prophecy in order to express solidarity with the Ptolemaic rulers rather than hostility against them. However, the hopes expressed in the Potter's Oracle stem from the old Egyptian religion and Pharaonic imagery which is essentially anti-Ptolemaic.<sup>88</sup> Although it is probable that the Ptolemies drew on the Pharaonic ideology to legitimise themselves, the idea that the concept was then adapted by a Jewish Sibyllist who probably was not from Egypt rests on a lot of assumptions. However, structural similarity with the Oracle of the Potter is undeniable.<sup>89</sup> Since the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century it has been acknowledged in biblical scholarship that biblical prophecy and apocalypticism have a certain relation to Egyptian demotic material.<sup>90</sup> An absolute chronology for this material, however, needs to be established still.

Several centuries after the Oracle of the Potter was written, the apocalypse of Elijah picked up on the king from the sun from the Potter's Oracle in a sequence of good and bad kings.<sup>91</sup>

#### **Excursus: The Oracle of the Potter**

The Oracle of the Potter is a Hellenistic Egyptian prophetic text that was originally written in demotic Egyptian but has only come down to us in Greek recensions.<sup>92</sup> The anti-Hellenistic recension stems from the last third of the second century BCE. The latter has often been seen as a key in understanding apocalypticism, be it Egyptian or (post)-biblical while others have seen it as an example of anti-Hellenistic opposition in Egypt in the second century BCE. However, in his most recent edition Ludwig Koenen has argued that from the second century BCE a clear discrimination between Greeks, Egyptians is no longer visible because Greek had become the administrative language throughout the Hellenistic world.<sup>93</sup> In light of this, the Oracle of the Potter has mingled Greek and Egyptian material, be it in terms of grammar or *topoi*. The expected king from Helios/Re no longer is a real ruler, but rather a symbolic ideal figure because by the second century no real expectation for the return of the Egyptian Pharaohs would have been actual. The ideal Pharaoh King was but a memory of a glorious past. The transformation of those traditional motifs is close to later Egyptian apocalypticism. Koenen no longer regards the Oracle of the Potter as political anti-Hellenistic propaganda but rather as a social-political document of the tension between Chora

---

<sup>85</sup> See excursus below for details.

<sup>86</sup> See excursus below.

<sup>87</sup> Collins, 1974, 40ff.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998b, 24.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. the descriptions of chaos and turmoil before the establishment of the divine order Cf. P<sub>2</sub> 4; 32; 39-41 and P<sub>3</sub> 65-67 (king from Helios/Re).

<sup>90</sup> Cf. in general Schipper/Blasius, 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Apoc. El. 2.39.

<sup>92</sup> P<sub>1</sub>: P. Graf (Vienna: G. 29787), second century CE; P<sub>2</sub>: P. Rainer (Vienna: G. 19813), third century CE, version from ca. 113 BCE; P<sub>3</sub>: P. Oxy. 2332, third century CE, version from ca. 116 BCE. An anti-Jewish recension is preserved on P<sub>4</sub>: PSI 982 (CPJ III 520) from the middle of the second century BCE and P<sub>5</sub>: P. Oxy. [26] 3B.52.B (13) (a), second century BCE. See Koenen, 2002, 139f for details.

<sup>93</sup> Koenen, 2002, 170f.



(countryside) and Alexandria. A later anti-Jewish recension, which identifies the Jews in Heliopolis with lepers, supports this interpretation.<sup>94</sup>

The king coming from Helios/Re (P<sub>2</sub> 38-49; P<sub>3</sub> 64f), which Collins renders as 'from the sun', is Pharaoh (ἐπὶ τὰ πενήκοντα πέντε / ἔτ<η> ἢ ἀπὸ Ἡλίου παραγενόμενος).<sup>95</sup> Koenen renders Helios rather than sun which makes Collins' 'king from the sun' an unlikely rendition. Just as the sun god (Helios) defeats darkness every morning, Pharaoh defeats chaos. This topos is deeply rooted within Egyptian royal ideology.

The announcement of a Syrian king invading Egypt in P<sub>2</sub> 16f indeed points to Antiochus IV Epiphanes. If the king from Helios/Re should be identified with Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II it supports the view that the political component has been lost because he was a Hellenistic king. The tension between Greeks and Egyptians is no longer visible at this stage.

The Potter and the Sibyl have in common that the expected king is not a Messiah but rather a royal figure modeled on Egyptian/Jewish tradition. In the case of the Potter Pharaonic ideology served as a background whereas the Sibyl's king is closely modeled on Isaiah's Cyrus.<sup>96</sup>

Whereas in the pagan Egyptian material 'this king is part of a historical sequence, the Sibyl's brings it to an end'<sup>97</sup>. The reign of the king is embedded in a series that can be described as 'weal and woe'<sup>98</sup>, not so unlike biblical prophecies. Rather than reading the prophecy regarding the king against the particular background of the solar king from the Potter's Oracle, it should be read against the prophecy concerning Cyrus in Isa 41:25.

I have already pointed out that the seventh king neither is a saviour figure nor is he a specific Ptolemy. The passage on the king from the sun or east should likewise be treated with care. Rather than particularly on the Potter's Oracle, the prediction about the king from the east is based on that about Cyrus in Isa 41. The king from the east is an instrument of God, not unlike the king from Asia; however, he is a bearer of good tidings. While the king from Asia is a harbinger of death and destruction (although that will be followed by a peaceful period as well), the king from the east will explicitly give the earth rest (παύσει) from war (line 653).

The text reads that God will send a king ἀπ' ἡελίου. While indeed ἥλιος does mean sun it can also mean east.<sup>99</sup> East and West, Orient and Occident, are the places where the sun rises and sets. The designations 'Orient' and 'Occident', as regions of the world, are based on the compass directions in which they are located. These in turn were named after sunrise and, by analogy with this, sunset. Homer had already used these phenomena to determine a primary

<sup>94</sup> See Koenen, 2002, 139-187.

<sup>95</sup> Koenen deviates from his 1968 edition here (Koenen, 2002, 161 n. 82 cf. Koenen, 1968).

<sup>96</sup> For further reading on the relation of Egyptian material and prophecy and apocalypticism see Schipper/Blasius, 2002.

<sup>97</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 239.

<sup>98</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 239.

<sup>99</sup> Although ἀπ' ἡελίου is a shortened form of ἀπ' ἡελίου ἀνατολῶν (from the rising of the sun = east).

east-west axis for recording and describing the world<sup>100</sup>, which differed from that used in Egypt that was based on the direction of the flow of the Nile. The primacy of the East over the West is also found in the MT because it is the place from which the sun rises. On the other hand Greco-Roman sources stress the supremacy of the West over the East. This is analogous to their geographical position as well as the conquests of the East.<sup>101</sup>

It is the most plausible option to translate ἀπ' ἡελίοιο as 'from the east'. The reason for that is quite simple. A king from the sun is only fathomable if the Potter's oracle is presupposed. Besides, no other Jewish document speaks of a similar phenomenon. On the contrary, the Sibyl is - more so than contemporary sources like Philo and Josephus - very much opposed to astronomy and astrology. In her first eulogy of the pious, the Sibyl claims that these sciences lead astray and to idolatry. In line 221 the pious were praised for not searching after the cyclic course of the sun and moon (οὔτε γὰρ ἡελίου κύκλιον δρόμον οὔτε σελήνης). A solar king has no place here.

Furthermore, line 652 shows a strong similarity in wording to line 286 (see also comment there). Bold means verbatim and underline means analogous.

3.286 καὶ τότε δὴ **θεὸς οὐρανόθεν πέμψει βασιλῆα** 3.652 καὶ τότε ἀπ' ἡελίοιο **θεὸς πέμψει βασιλῆα**

The two phrases are almost identical. The only difference is the geographical marker. Whereas in line 286 the king will be sent from heaven (οὐρανόθεν), he will be sent from the east (ἀπ' ἡελίοιο) in line 652. The phrase ἀπ' ἡελίοιο is a substitute for οὐρανόθεν influenced by the biblical prophecy about the coming of Cyrus. It is striking that God will send (πέμψει) the respective king in contrast to the Egyptian king who is said to rule (βασιλεύσει) or the king from Asia who is said to come (ἔλθῃ). This stresses even more that these kings are instruments and messengers of God. Both kings (in line 286 and 652) are sent by God to execute his will. The similarity in wording shows that at the end of days God will send another king - like he once sent Cyrus - to revert the fate of his people. The prediction is clearly modelled on Isaiah's about Cyrus. The Sibyl looks to a similar event to happen in the near future.

Buitenwerf notes the similarities in wording to line 286 where the king is indeed Cyrus.<sup>102</sup> I do agree that the Sibyl may have picked up on Isaiah as she has already proven in other

<sup>100</sup> Homer, Od. 10.190-192. 'This line has created a great deal of difficulty to the commentators. How could anyone, who had spoken such words in vv. 185, 187 as "ἡέλιος κατέδυσ" and "φάνη Ἡώς", express his ignorance in v. 190 of the position of East and West? [...] ἡώς and ζόφος represent a sort of exhaustive 'dichotomy' of the world: cp. Od.1. 23; 8.29; 13. 240 Od., 241. All that Odysseus means to say is that he has not the least idea where they are.' Merry/Riddell, 1886, 415.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Polybius, Hist. 3.59.3 and Strabo, Geogr. 1.2.1.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 275.

instances. 'A Sibyl who turned Zechariah's 'daughter of Zion' into a κορή could very readily have turned Isaiah's relatively clear specification 'from the rising of the sun' into ἀπ' ἡελίου.<sup>103</sup>

Collins claims that the expression ἀπ' ἡελίου cannot mean 'from the east'.<sup>104</sup> It is indeed true that the denominator ἀνατολή is absent from the Sibyl's prediction. However, it is not required to denote the east.<sup>105</sup> The Sibyl's king from the east is most certainly inspired by Isaiah's Cyrus which is also evident from the similarities to line 286 where the reference to Cyrus is certain.

According to Buitenwerf the king from Asia and the king from the east can be identified.<sup>106</sup> This notion is not unfounded as the Sibyl often equates the terms East and Asia. Buitenwerf identifies a parallel in Phlegon's *Mirabilia*<sup>107</sup> which mainly consists of a collection of older material (see also lines 350ff and comment there). The oracle in the *Mirabilia* predicts that the goddess Athena will send a king from Asia; Asia being designated as the place where the sun sets (ἐξ Ἀσίας, ὅθεν ἡλίου ἀντολαί εισιν). Asia can be used interchangeably with East. The king will cross the Hellespont, form an alliance with the ruler of the mainland and conquer Rome. The oracle may very well stem from Asia Minor during the wars with Rome in the second and first century BCE, possibly even to the propaganda of Mithridates<sup>108</sup> - which, however, remains an educated guess. Similarly, the aforementioned Oracle of Hystaspes predicts the ruin of Rome and possibly the rule of the East were predicted.<sup>109</sup>

The wording in Phlegon is also very similar to Isa 41:25. In Isa 41:25 Cyrus is sent by God from the rising of the sun (ἀφ' ἡλίου ἀνατολῶν). In Isa 41:25 God speaks of one from the east that he has called from the north.<sup>110</sup> With regard to the positioning of (Second) Isaiah in Babylon it follows that Cyrus was expected from the (north)east. The Sibyl, who places

---

<sup>103</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 238.

<sup>104</sup> Collins, 1974, 40-41.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 12.239; Od. 9.26.

<sup>106</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 275.

<sup>107</sup> Phlegon, *Mirabilia* 3.8 (apud Lactantius, Inst. 7.13.11; FGH 257). Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 274.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 274.

<sup>109</sup> Lactantius, Inst. 7.15.11, 19. See also comments on lines 350ff.

<sup>110</sup> The LXX text reads ἐγὼ δὲ ἤγειρα τὸν ἀπὸ βορρᾶ καὶ τὸν ἀφ' ἡλίου ἀνατολῶν. Baltzer (2001, 121) notes that (with regard to the Hebrew text) 'it is difficult to reconcile the two directions "from the north" and "from the rising (of the sun)". They can be explained either as the two directions from which Cyrus came to Babylon, or they can be combined as an expression for northeast, or that north is the place from which JHWH calls. According to Watts (1987, 118) both descriptions apply to Cyrus. Cyrus departed from the east but went to Armenia, north of Mesopotamia, before beginning his march on Babylon. The LXX has βορρᾶς for North, which is not used by the Sibyl. The term can either refer to the north wind (Job 26:7; Sir 43:17) or north in general (Gen 13:14; Deut 3:27).

herself in Erythrea in Asia Minor, announces a king from the east which, if she has Cyrus in mind, is Asia.

It makes much more sense to view the oracle about the king from the East in light of Isa 41:25 rather than seeking an historic identification with Ptolemaic and other kings. Even so the king from Asia is divinely authorised (he will bring about a mass conversion) he does not give rest from war. On the contrary, he will come and ravage Egypt and fill everything up with evil – the latter was also said about the Romans in line 188. The king from the east, on the other hand, will bring (temporary) peace before the final divine intervention and will act according to the will (βουλή) of God (653). Cyrus is likewise said to act according to the will of JHWH.<sup>111</sup>

Another prediction concerning a king from the East in the Pseudepigrapha can be found in the Assumption of Moses (As. Mos. 3.1ff) and refers to Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>112</sup> As. Mos. is only preserved in Latin but it is commonly agreed that it is a translation of a Greek version, which may itself be a translation of a Hebrew version, or at least had a strong Semitic influence. The author is generally agreed upon to be of Palestinian origin.<sup>113</sup> The author of As. Mos. clearly imitates prophecies from the Hebrew Bible, in which it is not unusual to predict the coming of a hostile power as from one or another quarter of the compass, usually the East or the North.<sup>114</sup> In As. Mos. the king from the East (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar) is said to come and cover the land with cavalry and burn the temple and take its riches. The land of the East refers to Babylonia accordingly.<sup>115</sup> In this passage from As. Mos. the punishment of Israel is combined with that of Judah. There were in fact two kings from the East – Sennacherib of Assyria and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia - to cause the ruin of the ten tribes as well as that of the two tribes.<sup>116</sup> When the people return from exile and resume their sinful behaviour, however, another enemy will rise against them “from the West” (As. Mos. 6.8), i.e. the Romans, while the eschatological punishment is executed by the “king of the earth” (8.1). Whether or not the Sibyl drew from As. Mos. or vice versa cannot be said due to the problematic dating of both texts. As for As. Mos. there are two opposing opinions: Either one takes the text as a unit so that the text must be from the first century CE or one dates the original corpus to the second century BCE.<sup>117</sup> Even if a consensus were to be found it still would not clarify whether or not the two texts depend on each other. Rather than that it can be said that the increasing focus on

<sup>111</sup> Isa 44:28.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Brandenburger, 1976, 71 n. 1a. Text of As. Mos. 3.1: Illis temporibus venit ab oriente rex...

<sup>113</sup> Hofmann, 2000, 33.

<sup>114</sup> Tromp, 1993, 162. Cf. Jer 1:15; 4:6; 6:22; Dan 11.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. As. Mos. 3.13.

<sup>116</sup> Tromp, 1993, 162.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Hofmann, 2000, 30. Cf. Tromp, 1993, 116-117.

geographical markers may be owed to an overall growing interest in the geography of the world (and science in general) that was brought about by Hellenism. Even though the king from the East is a negative character in the *As. Mos.* it also comes to the fore that the balance of power shifted to the west (Rome) later on. The coming of a king from either point of compass has to be seen within a certain historical context. At a time when an evil kingdom arose from the western sea, the expectation of a Cyrus-like king from the East is not so unexpected.<sup>118</sup> As we have seen, texts like Josephus and Jubilees likewise put a new focus on geography by drawing from biblical tradition on the one hand and Greco-Roman historiography on the other.<sup>119</sup>

It is said that the king will kill some and make treaties with others. This reflects again the notion that only the ones who obey God's law will be saved. It also highlights the juridical function of the king.<sup>120</sup> The absence of any reference to the land of Israel is again noteworthy and shows once more that the Sibyl is not interested in ethnic bonds but ethical behaviour. The function of the king from the east is universal as he will give the entire world rest from war (πᾶσαν γαῖαν παύσει πολέμοιο κακοῖο).

However, the king will not accomplish these things by his own will (βουλή) but by following God's doctrines (655f). Again, the Sibyl expresses the notion that everything is directed by God and nothing happens against his will. The king from the east is an instrument of God who executes his will, like Cyrus did in Second Isaiah's account.<sup>121</sup> The king will act in obedience to God, which implies that he will heed God's law. Nothing like that was said about the Asian king. The identification of the Asian king and the king from the east can be refuted.

The king's function is indeed a positive one because he will give the entire earth rest from war (πᾶσαν γαῖαν παύσει πολέμοιο κακοῖο). In the beginning of history, the Titans have caused the beginning of the first war (πολέμοιο καταρχή) for men (155). The notion that warfare is a primary source of evil comes full circle here. The king from the east will finally give a pause to men. However, he is no saviour figure at the end of days. After his brief appearance, he fades from view and the eschatological woes continue. The reign of the king takes place in a series of 'weal and woe'<sup>122</sup> oracles rather than in the style of biblical prophecy.

<sup>118</sup> It should be noted that solar imagery was common for Persian rulers. Cf. Gesche, 1969.

<sup>119</sup> See also Scott, 2003.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Dan 7:13.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Isa 44:24-45:8.

<sup>122</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 239. This has been already observed by Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 136-137. In some contemporary texts the idea of a *Zwischenreich* and the judgement of the wicked can be found in 1 En. 93:1-14; 2 Esd 8:28ff; 12:34; ApcBar (syr) 29:3; 30:1; 40:3 and 74:2. The idea of a *Zwischenreich* in Luke and Matthew is sometimes traced back to Sib 3 and Virgil's Fourth Eclogue in its structure: 1. appearance of the Messiah

In light of the Sibyl's attitude towards the west, i.e. the Romans, it is not surprising that the Sibyl awaits the advent of a king from the east. Her negative assessment of the west is visible in the oracles against the Macedonians and above all the Romans (see comment on lines 174-75 and 350ff). The king from the East will bring punishment for the wicked, i.e. the immoral people who do not obey God's law, and with it a temporary cessation of war for the world as a whole. The motif of an eastern/Asian avenger occurs in other texts of the period as well and is a propagandistic reversal of Roman claims to world dominion.

### 7.8 The temple will be restored in the age of the king from the east (657-660a)

657 ναὸς<sup>123</sup> δ' αὖ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ περικαλλεῖ πλούτῳ  
 658 βεβριθῶς, χρυσῶ τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ ἡδὲ τε κόσμῳ  
 659 πορφυρέῳ· καὶ γαῖα τελεσφόρος ἡδὲ θάλασσα  
 660a τῶν ἀγαθῶν πλήθουσα.

And the temple of the great God will again be laden with  
 very beautiful wealth: gold, silver and with purple ornament,  
 and the earth will bear fruit and the sea  
 will be full of good things.

Lines 657-660a have no grammatical connection to the passage on the king. Some scholars have assumed a lacuna between lines 656 and 657 because lines 657-660a only contain participles but no verb. However, the elliptic structure is not uncommon in Greek so that the missing form of εἰμί is not a problem. The translation would be as follows: 'And the temple of the great God will again be very beautiful etc.'. The participles in the following lines are subordinated to the elliptic ἔσται accordingly.<sup>124</sup>

According to the reading according to Geffcken, the temple will overflow with riches and the earth will be fertile and the sea will be full of good. The couplet 'land and sea' occurs repeatedly in Sib. Or. 3 and usually is a merism to describe the world as a whole.<sup>125</sup> According to that, the entire earth will be blissful at that time, a motif that recurs repeatedly

---

(652ff.), 2. the eschatological war against the holy city (663ff), 3. a messianic peaceful kingdom (702ff, cf. Gauger, 1998, 501) I, on the other hand, do not think that a temporary messianic age was intended by the Sibyllist. Rather than having a chronological progression of eschatological events in mind, he wobbles between judgement and salvation until the eventual erection of God's kingdom/dominion.

<sup>123</sup> Lines 657-660a speak of a blissful period for the Temple. The word ναὸς in line 657 is a conjecture by August Meineke (1869, 585) noted in Geffcken's edition. The manuscripts read λαὸς Φ or λαοὺς Ψ. While it is true that the phrase λαὸς μέγαλοιο θεοῦ does not occur anywhere else in the book (Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 276). The phrase ἔθνος μέγαλοιο θεοῦ, which is not far removed from the manuscript reading, occurs in line 192. However, ναὸς μέγαλοιο θεοῦ does occur repeatedly (cf. 274, 565, and 575). Furthermore, temple fits context-wise as the nations will strip the temple in lines 665-66. Moreover, it would seem unlikely that one would refer to the people as being beautiful with riches wherefore Geffcken's reading is preferable.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. BDR § 128.4.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.93, 176-177, 271-323

throughout the book and is reminiscent of classical descriptions of the golden age.<sup>126</sup> According to the order of the text this will happen after the advent of the eastern king. For the pious, who obey the laws of God, the king will be a harbinger of good as it is foreshadowed in line 654. Lines 657-660a sum up the blissful events that will occur after the advent of the king from the east. The blissfulness of the temple supports the idea that the king from the east is modelled on Cyrus: in line 286ff the king that God sent from heaven (Cyrus) was said to bring about a blissful period. In 294 the Temple was said to be as it was before (the exile) when God sends the king.

### 7.9 Völkersturm: The assault of the ἔθνη (660b-668)

660b καὶ ἄρξονται βασιλῆες  
 661 ἀλλήλοις κοτέειν ἐπαμύνοντες κακὰ θυμῷ·  
 662 ὁ φθόνος οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.  
 663 ἀλλὰ πάλιν βασιλῆες ἐθνῶν ἐπὶ τήνδε γε γαῖαν  
 664 ἀθρόοι ὀρμήσονται ἑαυτοῖς κῆρα φέροντες·  
 665 σηκὸν γὰρ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ καὶ φῶτας ἀρίστους  
 666 πορθεῖν βουλήσονται, ὀπηνίκα γαῖαν ἴκωνται.  
 667 θήσουσιν κύκλῳ πόλεως μιαιοὶ βασιλῆες  
 668 τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος ἔχων καὶ λαὸν<sup>127</sup> ἀπειθῆ.

And kings will  
 begin to be angry with each other, mediating evil in their hearts<sup>128</sup>,  
 envy is not good for miserable mortals.  
 But again the kings of the nations will throw themselves  
 against this land, bringing death upon themselves.  
 For they will wish to ravage the temple of the great God,  
 and excellent men, when they enter the land.  
 The reproachful kings will surround the city,  
 each of them will have his throne and faithless people.

Line 660b changes the tone of the text. Kings will be envious of each other and launch an attack on 'this land' and attempt to destroy the temple. The passage is thoroughly interwoven with Greek thought. In line 662 where the Sibyl remarks that envy (φθόνος) is not good for men and is the cause for the strife of the respective kings. Envy, like avarice, is often mentioned in catalogues of vices.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Cf. 367-380, 619-623, 741-61, 767-795.

<sup>127</sup> Geffcken's edition reads ναός instead of λαός as we have it in the manuscripts (Φ). Merkel (2003, 1103) and Buitenerf (2003, 242) retain the manuscript reading which I follow here.

<sup>128</sup> Translation following Buitenerf, 2003, 276 and Merkel, 2003, 1103.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Wis 6:23; Philo, Spec. 3.3; Rom 1:19; Gal 5:21; 1 Tim 6:4; Tit 3:3.

The entire passage is reminiscent of the *Völkersturm* in biblical prophecy<sup>130</sup>; the final assault of Israel's enemies which will be availed by God. The phrase in lines 663-664 the Sibyl states that the kings will throw themselves 'against this land'. In the LXX the phrase 'against this land' has three occurrences, namely 2 Kgs 18:25//Isa 36:10, and Jer 44:19 which refer to the land of Israel.<sup>131</sup> These texts are written from a Judean perspective. The Sibyl borrowed the phrase from the LXX as she did in other instances. The Sibyl is not clear about what land she refers to. Since the temple was the subject of lines 657-660a a reference to Israel would be expected. However, the Sibyl omits any geographical qualification. Rather than that she deals freely with material from the LXX. 'This land' is any land in which the people of God dwell.

It is agreed among scholars that one of the passages the Sibyl uses here is Jer 1:15 (cf. lines 667-8).<sup>132</sup> However, other than in Jeremiah where the *Völkersturm* serves as punishment for Israel's current idolatry, in the Sibyl it has a deeper eschatological perspective. It is the result of reading the Hebrew Bible in a particular way, a feature that the Sibyl shares with Jewish Hellenistic and rabbinic literature in general and with Enoch 1 in particular.<sup>133</sup> However, the kings will bring doom upon themselves (664) for the attempt to destruction the temple. Lines 300-313, 324-336 also mention divine punishment for the destruction of the temple. The imagery is perfectly biblical. The idea that the kings will first battle each other also occurs in 4 Ezra 13:33-34.

The phrase βασιλῆες ἔθνων (kings of the nations) in line 663 is obviously borrowed from biblical tradition. The term ἔθνος has eight occurrences in Sib. Or. 3, of which only one refers to the people of the Great God (194). In all the other seven occurrences it describes foreign nations, but never all of them as a collective. Only in line 663 does the plural ἔθνη occur because it is borrowed from a *Vorlage* in Jer 1:15 where the assault of the nations is Israel's punishment for idolatry.<sup>134</sup> In the Sibyl's version, however, the assault is transformed into an eschatological event that does not deal with sin and punishment but rather aims at the final destruction of the wicked and the manifestation of the divine dominion on earth. The final assault against the land and the temple is a traditional motif.<sup>135</sup>

The reference to the land (γῆ, line 663), the temple (σηκόν, line 665), and the city (πόλις, line 667) remain obscure. It is clear that the intended reader would have known what and

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Deut 28:49; Ps 2:1-2; Jer 1:11-16; Ezek 38-39; Joel 2:1-10; Zech 14:1-5.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. 2 Bar 29.2.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 277; Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 226, 230, 235 and esp. 233 where she juxtaposes Sib. Or. 3 and Ezek 38:19-20. Cf. also Rev 17:13.

<sup>133</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 226.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 226.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. 1 En. 56-57, 4 Ezra 13:5; 33-34; Rev 16:12-16; 19:19; Test. Jos. 19:3.



where these places are as they are taken from biblical tradition. On top of that, the omission of geographical markers makes it possible for the reader to associate the references with a different place altogether, i.e. their home in the Diaspora. Furthermore, the land, the temple, and the city seem to blend into one.<sup>136</sup> The assault against the land-temple-city is in fact an assault against God and the law enacted by him for that matter and not only against his people. The fact that the nations will be unsuccessful in their attempted destruction of land, temple, and city suggests that the Second Temple is still intact at the time of writing.

### 7.10 Judgement of the nations (669-679)<sup>137</sup>

669 καὶ ῥα θεὸς φωνῇ μεγάλη πρὸς πάντα λαλήσει  
 670 λαὸν ἀπαίδευτον κενεόφρονα, καὶ κρίσις αὐτοῖς  
 671 ἔσσεται ἐκ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ, καὶ πάντες ὀλοῦνται  
 672 χειρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν δὲ πεσοῦνται  
 673 ῥομφαῖαι πύρινοι κατὰ γαῖαν· λαμπάδες, αὐγαί  
 674 ἵξονται μεγάλαι λάμπουσai εἰς μέσον ἀνδρῶν.  
 675 γαῖα δὲ παγγενέτειρα σαλεύσεται ἡμασι κείνοις  
 676 χειρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο, καὶ ἰχθύες οἱ κατὰ πόντον  
  
 677 πάντα τε θηρία γῆς ἡδ' ἄσπετα φῦλα πετεινῶν  
 678 πᾶσαι τ' ἀνθρώπων ψυχαὶ καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα  
 679 φρίξει ὑπ' ἀθανάτοιο προσώπου καὶ φόβος ἔσται.

And then God will speak with a loud voice to all  
 the ignorant, empty-headed people and there will be judgement upon them,  
 all will perish at the hand of the immortal. Fiery swords will fall  
 from heaven unto the earth. Torches, bright lights,  
 will come shining into the midst of the people.  
 The earth, mother of all, will be shaken in those days  
 at the hand of the Immortal, and the fish in the sea  
 and the wild beasts of the earth, and the unspeakable great tribes of birds,  
 all human soul and the entire sea  
 will shudder before the face of the Immortal and there will be fear.

The long description of the punishment of the wicked nations that will try to destroy the temple in lines 669-701 is essentially modelled on the punishment of Gog and Magog in Ezek 38-39 as I have already mentioned above. The nations will mount a final assault on the temple and God will come to judge them with sword and fire. This biblical theme is evoked by a method which Lightfoot describes as a 'montage'<sup>138</sup>. The Sibyl has this motif in common with

<sup>136</sup> Lied (2008) has observed that in 2 Bar the temple, city, and the land tend to overlap and that there is no clear demarcation between them. All of them are tied to the righteous behaviour of the people so that at the time of destruction the reference to the temple or Jerusalem is simultaneously a reference to the land (cf. especially 31-41).

<sup>137</sup> Not all lines can be discussed for reasons of scope.

<sup>138</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 226.

several other apocalyptic texts, what makes the Sibyl stand out, however, is the extent of her debt to one particular text, namely the account of the attack of God and Magog in Ezekiel 38. Lightfoot proposes that by sticking ostensibly close to Ezek 38 the Sibyl, more than other texts, is trying to be *Ersatz* prophecy.<sup>139</sup>

In line 670 the enemies are called empty-minded (κενέοφρονα). The term has already occurred in line 590 and describes the peoples' ignorance towards the law of God. The assault on the land-temple-city stems from the same empty-mindedness as the disobedience to the law in line 590. While the land-temple-city has become an abstract place the law does not require a specific place at all, it is wherever people keep it. In comparison to the other oracles of doom in Sib. Or. 3, this judgement is universal. References to specific nations and kingdoms are nowhere to be found. It is the judgement of all ignorant people that will launch a final assault against God himself.

All the impious kings and their people will be punished at the hands of God. God will come and pass judgement on them (κρίσις) and all shall be destroyed (καὶ πάντες ὀλοῦνται). Κρίσις is the common term for judgement and occurs seven times in Sib. Or. 3.<sup>140</sup>

The key difference to Ezekiel, from which the Sibyl draws, is the obvious omission of Israel and Jerusalem - which is surprising considering the abundance of nations the Sibyl lists elsewhere. As I have already pointed out, the land as such and Israel's claim to it have no immediate importance to the Sibyl, nor does Jerusalem. For all we know, the land-temple-city is somewhere. In fact, she places the origin of the people of God in Chaldea rather than in the holy land (cf. line 218 above). In the passages that are directly influenced by biblical prophecy, the references are faded to 'the city' (πόλις cf. line 667) or 'this land' (τόδε γῆ cf. line 663).

In line 673 it is said that fiery swords will fall down from heaven (οὐρανόθεν).<sup>141</sup> Οὐρανόθεν is the typical marker in the Third Sibyl telling the reader that something is enacted by God who is in heaven. A fiery sword, as an unnatural phenomenon, can only come from God. In Gen 3:25 LXX the Cherubim are guarding the Garden of Eden holding flaming swords (φλογίνην ῥομφαίαν). The appearance of such an unnatural phenomenon signifies God's coming for judgement. Swords in the sky appear elsewhere as harbingers of cataclysmic events.<sup>142</sup> It is possible that the image is derived from the observation of celestial

<sup>139</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 228. As a matter of fact, the usage of the LXX in Sib. Or. 3 deserves far more attention. However, this cannot be done in the present study.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.321, 326, 670, 687, 784. There is a total of 263 occurrences of the term in the LXX and 47 in the NT.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Lactantius, Inst. 7.19.5; Apoc. El. 40.14f.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Isa 34:5, Josephus, B.J., 6.288f, Lactantius, Inst. 7.19.4-5.

phenomena such as shooting stars or an aurora borealis. A similar image recurs in line 798-799. Celestial phenomena in antiquity were commonly believed to derive from God since heaven is his realm.

The earth will be shaken (675). The verb σαλεύω is often used by the Sibyl in the context of earthquakes and is a common feature in the description of theophanies.<sup>143</sup> The mention of γαῖα δὲ παγγενέτειρα<sup>144</sup> is, however, curious. In line 550 παγγενέτης is used as an epithet for God. The Sibyl also refers to God as γενετήρ several times (278, 296, 604, 726) - showing that she is not interested in his fatherly side but in his cosmological creational side.<sup>145</sup> The description of the earth as mother of all in line 675 is probably of pagan influence.<sup>146</sup>

The fish in the sea, the beasts of the earth, the birds in the sky, all men and the sea will shudder.<sup>147</sup> Once more the Sibyl is using merisms to fathom the entire earth, the earth, the sea, and the skies and what inhabits it. In fact, God's entire creation will tremble before him when he comes to judge men. Judgement, i.e. the destruction of God's creation is a common theme in the ANE.<sup>148</sup> The fact that God is the creator and men's disregard of that fact is a common theme in biblical prophets.<sup>149</sup> The Sibyl picks up on that topos, however, in her recast it aims at the foreign nations. This reversal of prophecy had already taken place after the exile. Trembling in the presence of God is another motif typical in theophanies and judgement scenarios.<sup>150</sup>

685 τείχεα δ' εὐποίητα χαμαὶ πεσέονται ἅπαντα  
 686 ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων, ὅτι τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἔγνωσαν  
 687 οὐδὲ κρίσιν μέγαλοιο θεοῦ, ἀλλ' ἄφρονι θυμῷ  
 688 πάντες ἐφορμηθέντες ἐφ' Ἱερὸν ἤρατε λόγχας.  
 689 καὶ κρινεῖ πάντας πολέμῳ θεὸς ἡδὲ μαχαίρῃ  
 690 καὶ πυρὶ καὶ ὑετῷ τε κατακλύζοντι· καὶ ἔσται  
 691 θεῖον ἅπ' οὐρανόθεν, αὐτὰρ λίθος ἡδὲ χάλαζα  
 692 πολλή καὶ χαλεπή· θάνατος δ' ἐπὶ τετράποδ' ἔσται.

The well-built walls of hostile men will all fall  
 to the ground, because they neither knew the law  
 nor the judgement of the Great God, but with foolish mind  
 you lifted spears and attacked the sanctuary.  
 And God will judge all with war, sword  
 fire and deluging rain. There will be  
 brimstone from heaven, stones and much

<sup>143</sup> Cf. lines 158b-195 and comments there, Judg 5:4f, Hab 3:6, As. Mos. 10.4.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Ant.Graec. 1.19.11.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 546.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Aristotle, Mund. 397a 4; IG III 716. The male form παγγενέτης is an epithet of Zeus. Cf. Orpheus, Hymni 20.5.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Ezek 38:20.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Keel/Schroer, 2001, 191-197. Cf. Isa 13:9f; Isa 24; Ezek 16:49; Hos 4:2f; Jer 4:19-31; 12:4.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Amos 4:13; 9:5-6; Hos 8:14; Isa 1:2; Isa 5:12; 17:7-8; 22:11; 29:16; 37:16 et al.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Jer 2:12; Jas 2:19 for φρίσσω.

hailstorm. Death will be upon the cattle.

Lines 685-688 form one complex clause. Line 686b introduces a subordinate clause describing the reason for the nations' punishment. In lines 686-688 men are once more accused of being ignorant towards God and his law. Whereas in biblical prophecies it is usually Israel who is accused of forsaking and backsliding, the Sibyl addresses mankind as a whole.<sup>151</sup> In line 687 the Sibyl suddenly switches to the second person singular and then back to the third person in line 689. The inconsistency may serve as a dramaturgical aspect or maybe influenced by Ezek 38, which uses the second person throughout. The nation's ignorance towards the law is once more given as a reason for their judgement.

At the centre of the passage is the assault on the temple in line 688. The subordinate clause runs from line 686b to line 688 and justifies the punishment of the nations. They will be judged because they were ignorant towards the law and assaulted the temple. The question remains whether the Sibyl presupposes the destruction of the temple in 70 CE or not. In line 328f she evidently did. Here, she might have taken the assault on the temple from tradition. Because of the nation's attempt to destroy the temple God will judge them with sword and fire.

693 καὶ τότε γνώσονται θεὸν ἄμβροτον, ὃς τὰδε κρίνει·

Then they will acknowledge the immortal God, who ordains these things,

Eventually, after God has judged all with sword and war, a portion of the wicked people will recognise God as sovereign. Line 693 is antithetical to line 686 where it is said that they did not know (οὐκ ἔγνωσαν). Only through their judgement will they recognise (γνώσονται) God. The idea is probably influenced by Ezek 28:23 and 39:6.<sup>152</sup> The passage concludes with an emphasis on the divine origin of the Sibyl's prophecies and the importance of obedience to God (cf. lines 571-572). The repetition of the term κρίσις/ κρίνω in this passage is noteworthy. It first occurs in line 687 where it is coupled with the law. The nations ignored the law of God and his judgement (κρίσις). Those two statements are parallel as God's judgement is laid out in the law. In line 689 God is said to judge (κρίνει) all with sword and fire. The passage concludes with the statement that these are the things which he ordains (κρίνει). Here the relation of judgement (as punishment) and law is stressed explicitly. The judgement of the nations occurs all the way on the vertical line. They will be punished for ignoring the law, which is the will of God. In order to enter into relations with God and partake in the utopian divine dominion that he will establish on earth they are required to

<sup>151</sup> Although later prophets such as Habakkuk (3), Joel (4), and Zachariah (14) already exhibit the notion of global judgement,

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Also Sir 36.

abandon their idolatry and prostrate themselves before the Immortal. This will also be the subject of the next and final section of the book.

### 7.11 Conclusion of the section (698-701)

698 αὐτός μοι τάδε πάντα θεὸς μέγας ἀέναός τε  
 699 εἶπε προφητεῦσαι· τάδε δ' ἔσσεται οὐκ ἀτέλεστα·  
 700 οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητον, ὅ τι κεν μόνον ἐν φρεσὶ θεῇ·  
 701 ἄψευστον γὰρ πνεῦμα θεοῦ πέλεται κατὰ κόσμον.

The great, eternal God himself told me  
 to prophesy all these things. They will not be unfulfilled.  
 What he puts in mind will not fail to come true  
 for the spirit of God is without deceit on earth.

Lines 698-701 conclude the section with a statement of the Sibyl. The Sibyl claims that her prophecies never remain unfulfilled, which according to Deut 18:9-22 is what distinguishes true prophets from false ones.<sup>153</sup> Lines 698-701 clearly mark the end of the section and separate it from the next.

---

<sup>153</sup> Cf. lines 809-812, 819-823a and comments there.

## 8 Section VII

*Lines 702-766*

*Universal conversion, pilgrimage to the temple and the common law*

### 8.1 Introduction

Line 702 has no syntactical connection to line 701. Since lines 698-701 form a conclusion of the last passage, it is evident that line 702 starts a new one. Lines 702-7 form one sentence. Following the judgement of the nations in lines 669-701 the Sibyl heralds that the sons of God shall live around the temple peacefully and that because of their good example, the nations will realise their error and turn to God and his law to have a share in the bliss of his people.

The Section starts out with a brief account of God's benevolence towards his 'sons' (υἱοὶ θεοῦ) who live around the Temple (702-709). Lines 710-731 are set in the first person. They contain two songs put in the mouth of the penitent people of the nations that now recognise God's sovereignty on grounds of the benefactions that he gives to his people. The cities and islands, as the nations are referred to, will realise the power of God and praise him as the sovereign ruler and accept his law. The "conversion"<sup>1</sup> of the isles and cities is structured by two psalm-like hymns put in the mouth of the penitent Gentiles that begin with the interjection δεῦτε (716, 725). The first hymn is probably introduced by the Sibyl in line 715: (A sweet speech they will raise from their mouths) ἡδὺν ἀπὸ στομάτων δὲ λόγον ἄξουσιν ἐν ὕμνοις. The first hymn is framed by line 715 and 724. The latter concludes the hymn with a statement of the Sibyl: thus will the souls of the faithful men cry out (ταῦτα βοήσουσιν ψυχὰι πιστῶν ἀνθρώπων). The second hymn starts in line 725 without a proper introduction. The start of the second hymn is instead evident from the switch to the first person plural and the repetition of the interjection δεῦτε. In the second song, the singers address God as father (θεὸς γενετήρ) and speak of his people as θεοῦ δῆμος (people of God). While line 702 speaks of the benefactions that the υἱοὶ θεοῦ will receive, the hymn concludes that the faithful people will realise that God is indeed their father (726) and that the pious are indeed his people. The second hymn ends abruptly in line 731. This is evident from another switch in person in line 732, where the Sibyl addresses Hellas in the second person singular and admonishes her to

---

<sup>1</sup> We cannot speak of conversion in the proper sense. However, the problem is one of translation. The Sibyl herself does not use the term but describes a phenomenon of which it would be misleading to speak of conversion, proselytism or god-fearers for that matter as all of these terms are connected to a chain of other problems.

cease her arrogance and to not join the nations in their assault against the people of God but serve him in order to have a share in the benefactions that the sons of God will receive.

The overall section is particularly interesting with regard to the relation between the people of God and the nations. The book moves towards its conclusion and the establishment of the divine dominion on earth. The people of God fulfil their task on the vertical line by fulfilling to prophecy that they will be moral guides for all mortals. Because of their obedience to the divine law all good things come upon them. The nations finally realise this and turn to God. Now that judgement has come to pass the vertical line reaches its fulfilment.

## 8.2 Structure

702-709 The sons of God

710-715 The isles of the nations

716-724 The first hymn of the Penitent

725-731 The second hymn of the Penitent

732-740 The third admonition of the Greeks

744-756 Judgement

757-761 The common law

762-766 Fourth Admonition

## 8.3 The sons of God live peacefully (702-709)

702 υἱοὶ δ' αὖτ' ἀπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ περὶ ναδὸν ἅπαντες  
 703 ἡσυχίῳ<sup>2</sup> ζήσονται<sup>3</sup> εὐφραίνόμενοι<sup>3</sup> ἐπὶ τούτοις,  
 704 οἷς δώσει κτίστης ὁ δικαιοκρίτης τε μόναρχος  
 705 αὐτὸς γὰρ σκεπάσειε μόνος μεγαλωστὶ παραστάς,  
 706 κύκλοθεν ὥσει τεῖχος ἔχων πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο.  
 707 ἀπτόλεμοι<sup>4</sup> δ' ἔσσονται ἐν ἄστεσιν ἡδ' ἐνὶ χώραις.<sup>5</sup>  
 708 οὐ χεὶρ γὰρ πολέμοιο κακοῦ, μάλα δ' ἔσσειται αὐτοῖς  
 709 αὐτὸς ὑπέρμαχος ἀθάνατος καὶ χεὶρ Ἁγίου.

But the sons of the great God will live peacefully  
 around the temple, rejoicing in these things

<sup>2</sup> The term is probably derived from Hesiod's description of the Golden Age in his *Opera et Dies*. Sib. Or. 3.703 cf. Hesiod, Op. 119. See comment on lines 744-756 below.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Joel 2:23 (καὶ τὰ τέκνα Σιών, χαίrete καὶ εὐφραίνεσθε ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ ὑμῶν); 1. En. 25:6: Then shall they rejoice with joy (εὐφρανθήσονται εὐφραίνόμενοι) and be glad, and into the holy place shall they enter; and its fragrance shall be in their bones, and they shall live a long life on earth, such as thy fathers lived: And in their days shall no sorrow or plague or torment or calamity touch them (Trans. Charlesworth, OTP 1). Cf. also comment on line 785.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 2.202; 9.35, 41 et al.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the similar expressions for 'in cities and fields' used in line 237 (κατ' ἀγρούς τε πόλεις τε), 581 (ὄλβιοι οἰκήσουσι πόλεις καὶ πόντας ἀγρούς) and 750 (πλήρεις δ' αὖτε πόλεις ἀγαθῶν καὶ πόντες ἀγροῖ).

which the creator, righteous judge and monarch will give,  
 for he alone will shield them standing by them exceedingly,  
 encircling them as if he put a wall of burning fire around them<sup>6</sup>  
 Free from war they shall live in cities and fields,  
 The hand of dreadful war shall not be upon them  
 For the Immortal will be their protector and the hand of the Holy One.

Lines 702-709 form one parallel structured sentence. Lines 707-9 are parallel to lines 705-6 and 702-3. All three describe the divine protection of the sons of God. While lines 702-4 state that they will live peacefully rejoicing in the divine gifts, lines 705-6 and 707-9 detail the nature of the divine protection. Parallel structure has been observed in several instances and is a typical literary device of the Third Sibyl.

The judgement of the wicked in lines 698-701 is contrasted by the happiness of the sons of God. The image of the protection and happiness in the end of days evokes several biblical texts.<sup>7</sup> However, living peacefully is also an image found in Hesiod's description of the Golden Age.<sup>8</sup>

### 8.3.1 Living around the temple (702-703)

In lines 702-703 it is said that the sons of the great God (υἱοὶ μεγάλου θεοῦ) will live peacefully around the Temple (περὶ ναὸν ἅπαντες ἡσυχίως ζήσονται). In line 213f the εὐσεβεῖς were designated in a similar fashion as οἱ περὶ ναὸν οἰκεῖουσιν. However, they were subsequently punished for their idolatry with exile and the destruction of the Temple. In the section at hand their happiness stands in marked contrast to the calamities that happened to them when they did not heed the law. The Sibyl omits further accusations put to the pious because in her understanding, judgement has already come to pass and they have learned their lesson not to deviate from the law of God. This is a common trait in exilic- and post-exilic biblical theology and serves as an explanation for the exile.<sup>9</sup> The people of God serve as an example and as moral guides for all men (line 195) and they will be the only ones to survive God's final judgement. Those who follow their good example will partake in their happiness. The section is essentially foreshadowing the divine dominion (767-808) in which all penitent

<sup>6</sup> The image is reminiscent of God's guidance of the people during the Exodus in the form of a pillar of fire (Exod 13:21-22).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ezek 38:11; Joel 2:23; Zech 2:9; Wis 5:20b-23.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hesiod, Op. 119. See comment on lines 744-756 below.

<sup>9</sup> This is particularly evident in Deuteronomy. Whereas the pre-exilic portions of Deuteronomy focused on the centralisation of the cult (cf. Deut 12; 16) and the taking of the land that had already taken place at the hands of Joshua, exilic-post-exilic Deuteronomists began to view the exile as punishment for Israel's transgressions (cf. Deut 28-30; a similar concept can also be found in Isa 36-39). At a second stage, the Deuteronomists dealt with the question how to go on after the exile. Hence, the covenant and the promise of the land were seen as acts of mercy rather than relying on the obedience of the people (cf. Deut 7:9; 9:5; 30:6).



people will live happily. Righteous praxis<sup>10</sup> defines living around the temple in the Third Sibyl. Living around the temple is an ethical condition rather than a spatial definition. Living around the temple defines a new spatial area that is not demarcated by physical or ethnic borders but by righteous praxis. Those who practice the law live around the temple wherever they are. The Sibyl is in line with the biblical prophets Isaiah and Zechariah when she announces that the judgement of the nations will bring about a mass-conversion.<sup>11</sup>

Once again, the Sibyl gives no geographical reference to the temple's location around which the pious people live. In line 213ff we have already observed that living around the Temple is symbolic and that the Temple is abstract place. The people of God do not live around the temple on the horizontal line since that would be impossible. Due to God's protection and sovereignty, the sons of God will live free from war in towns and in the countryside (ἐν ἄστεσιν ἡδ' ἐνὶ χώραις). This is a merism to describe the entire habitable world. Because of their special relationship with God, the people of God will be protected from war wherever they are. Hence, living around the temple is not limited to a specific location. In the world of the Sibyl it is not a horizontal but a vertical condition.

Assuming the book is aimed at a Jewish Diaspora, it would be unnecessary to give the location of the temple as this would be common and accepted knowledge. Be that as it may, only Jews in Judea or Jerusalem can actually live around about the temple. So the reference must be symbolic, on the vertical line; all the pious 'live around the Temple' by keeping the law and serving the true God. The factual temple is indeed central sacred space but it is also abstract space in the sense that it is in Judea and not within the vicinity of the Sibyl, who is local to Asia Minor<sup>12</sup>. The temple remains obscure. The Sibyl has no knowledge of its location or of what it looks like – or at least she does not share that information. Other apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic texts from the period, on the other hand, often speak of visions of the temple and its interior.<sup>13</sup> The Sibyl's temple is somewhere. It is abstract place that is not defined or described. It is the focal point of rightful worship and the sovereignty of God.

The temple as a metaphor for righteous praxis can also be found in other texts. In a poem in Sir 35:1-5<sup>14</sup>, for instance, the author describes that true worship is not made through sacrifice but through the observation of the law, in particular through moral prescriptions. In

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lied, 2008, 31-41.

<sup>11</sup> Isa 2:1-5 // Mic 4:1-3; Jer 3:17; Cf. also lines 608ff.

<sup>12</sup> See comment on lines 813f.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Zech 6:9-15; Ezek 40-48; Apc 7:15; 11:19; 14:15-17; 15:6-16:1; 21:22.

<sup>14</sup> The book of Sirach dates to approximately 180 BCE and was composed in Palestine (Skehan, 1987, 16).

fact, verse 1 states that the observation of the law is sacrifice enough.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, Sirach shares the notion that moral obligations are not only more important than sacrifice but also that they alone suffice. The notion that God does not delight in ritual sacrifice without the accompanying prerequisite moral obedience is already a commonplace in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>16</sup> The Sibyl and Sirach for that matter expand the topic by saying that righteous praxis can replace sacrificial service entirely. It is then certainly one of Judaism's particularly merits that it managed to live on without the temple after it was destroyed in 70 CE.

In the Fifth Sibylline Oracle the phrase is picked up on while the language becomes more utopian. There, the people are described as 'godlike heavenly race of the blessed Jews who dwell around the city of God at the centre of the earth (οἱ περιναϊετάουσι θεοῦ πόλιν ἐν μεσσογαίῳς)'.<sup>17</sup> Here we have an interpretation that is under the catastrophic impression of the destruction of the temple. The righteous people of God are rendered into the godlike Jews and the place which they dwell around is specified as the centre of the earth. The temple is described as having a tower that touches the clouds.<sup>18</sup> The contrast with the devastation of the land and the temple in 70 CE is striking. At this point 'place is constitutive of identity [...] drawing on ancient myths and held in the fate of grimmer realities'.<sup>19</sup> In the Third Sibyl, however, no such reflections can be traced yet.

#### **Excursus: The sons of God in related literature**

The designation 'sons of [the great] God' (υἱοὶ [μεγάλου] θεοῦ) contrasts the pious and the wicked people (not necessarily Jews and Gentiles!) and is often used to that end in writings from that period<sup>20</sup> or to designate heavenly beings in the Hebrew Bible<sup>21</sup>. The pious being sons of God designates their special relation to God over against the other nations. In the Hebrew Bible, 'sons of God' is also a cipher for the people of Israel. In the Third Sibyl, the ethnic marker is removed completely.

The designation 'sons of God' for Israel derives from Deut 14:1 (υἱοὶ ἐστε κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὑμῶν). Unfaithfulness of the 'children' leads to their abandonment by God (Deut 32:5, 19). In Isa 1:2, 4; 31:1, 9; Jer 3:14, 22 the sons (children) are described as rebellious and in Hos 2:1 'Not my people' will be called 'sons of the living God'.<sup>22</sup> In Isa 43:6 the return to Judea is predicted for the sons and daughters of God. All of those instances perceive the sons of God as a collective for Israel. In Jub 1:24-25 the people are referred to as children and sons of God who will not forsake them despite their backsliding. The most occurrences, however, can be found in the Wisdom of Solomon which uses the terms children and son alike. In Wis 2:18 (εἰ γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ δίκαιος υἱὸς θεοῦ) and 5:5 the righteous is a son of God. In my opinion the righteous of Wis do not necessarily refer to the Jewish people as a whole. Like the Sibyl Wis does not mention

<sup>15</sup> Ὁ συντηρῶν νόμον πλεονάζει προσφοράς, θυσιάζων σωτηρίου ὁ προσέχων ἐντολαῖς (he who keeps the law has offering enough, who offers a peace-offering keeps the law).

<sup>16</sup> 1 Sam 15:22-23; Ps 40:6-8; 51:16-17; Prov 21:3; Isa 1:11-17; Jer 7:21-23; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8.

<sup>17</sup> Sib. Or. 5.249-50.

<sup>18</sup> Sib. Or. 5.422-24.

<sup>19</sup> Lieu, 2004, 223.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Sir 4:10 (υἱὸς ὑψίστου); Jos. Asen. 6.2; 21.3 (singular of Joseph). Cf. Philo, Conf. 1:145-146; Names 1:131.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Gen 6:1-4; Ps 29:1 et al; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 (LXX: ἄγγελοι).

<sup>22</sup> καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, οὗ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς Οὐ λαὸς μου ὑμεῖς, ἐκεῖ κληθήσονται υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος.

Israel, Jews or Judea. Not all Jews are per se righteous. In the end, the nations will realise that the people are the sons of God (Wis 18:13). The sons are also ἔθνος ἅγιος (Wis 17:2) and δίκαιοι (10:20; 12:9; 10:6) in contrast to the non-Israelites who are ἄδικοι (16:24), ἄνομοι (17:2), and ἄσεβεῖς (16:16, 18; 19:1). All of these terms occur in Sib. Or. 3 for the wicked nations (Sib. Or. 3:183, 362, 496, 498, 730, 763). In Sib. Or. 5.502 it is said that evil was done unto the children of God (θεοῦ τέκνα) which will be avenged by God.

In 3 Macc 6:28 Ptolemy Philometer realises that the Jews are indeed the sons of the living God (ἀπολύσατε τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ παντοκράτορος ἐπουρανίου θεοῦ ζώντος). In Wis 18:4 it is said that God protects his sons and that the eternal light of the Torah will be given to the world through the sons of God.<sup>23</sup> This notion also occurs in Sib. Or. 3.194 and Josephus, C. Ap. 2.280 for that matter. Here too, the enemies of Israel realise the sonship of the people. However, even among Jews, the individual can be defined as a child of God (Wis 2:12-18) and as such he can experience hostility from his fellow Jews (Ps 73:15; Sir 4:10b). In Jos. Asen. 19.8 Aseneth is dubbed 'city of refuge' in which those who become sons of God will find refuge. It is a novelty that the sonship can be used in relation to those Gentiles who turn to God (it should be noted that Jos. Asen. does not speak of proper proselytes, i.e. people who officially convert to Judaism).

According to Buitenwerf, the author's primary aim in using the epithet 'sons of (the great) God' is to discriminate between Jews and gentiles.<sup>24</sup> This statement by Buitenwerf is inaccurate: while biblical tradition has it that the Israelites are the sons of God, later texts reveal that only those who obey the law of God can rightfully be called sons, children, or righteous. This includes godfearing non-Jews as can be seen from texts like Jos. Asen. and excludes unfaithful Jews accordingly as can be seen from Wis. In Wis 3:1, where it is said that the righteous (namely the ψυχὰι δικάϊων) are save in the hand of God (ἐν χειρὶ θεοῦ). In Wis a clear distinction between Jews and non-Jews is also debatable. Instead, it speaks of righteous (δίκαιοι)<sup>25</sup> and impious (ἄσεβεῖς) which may just as well reflect an inner-Jewish debate.<sup>26</sup> Jos. Asen. shows that Gentiles too can become sons of God if they forsake idolatry and turn to God. Since the Sibyl does not give away an ethnic marker, we can only deduce from the text that one can partake in the happiness of the sons of God and therefore become like them. This shows a tendency observed in Jos. Asen. and Wis that anyone willing to give up idolatry and obey the law of God can be part of his children. The Sibyl calls those people ψυχὰι πιστῶν ἀνθρώπων, the souls of faithful men (724). In line 775 it is said that there is no other Temple than the one God to the faithful men to honour (ὃν ἔδωκε θεὸς πιστοῖς ἀνδρεσσι). The Sibyl's universal outlook is very clear here because it is implied that the temple is meant for all faithful people (i.e. those that will still be there after God's

<sup>23</sup> Cf. comment on line 787.

<sup>24</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 280.

<sup>25</sup> The Sibyl does not use the term but speaks of ἐνσεβεῖς instead.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Blischke, 2007. See also comment on lines 767ff.

judgement) and not a select ethnic group.<sup>27</sup> The distinction is made via ethical behaviour and fear of God rather than nationality.<sup>28</sup> The extension of God's blessing to the nations can also be found in latter-day biblical tradition, particularly in Isaiah from whom the Sibyl frequently borrows<sup>29</sup> as well as in the works of Philo.<sup>30</sup>

While it is true that the identification of the pious people of God and the Jewish people is intended, it is only one side of the coin. The other side of the coin, I propose, is that the difference is not only that between Jews and non-Jews but that between pious and impious people. While the Sibyl pretends to be aimed at Gentiles, I believe that she is really reflecting an inner-Jewish debate not so unlike to the Wisdom of Solomon does.<sup>31</sup> That the Gentiles are admonished to keep the law is part of the fiction of the book rather than . This is not to say that the the nations can not be part of the future bliss; they are just not the real addressees of the book.

### 8.3.2 God is sovereign (704)

704 ... κτίστης ὁ δικαιοκρίτης τε μόναρχος.  
Creator, righteous judge, and sovereign.

A few noteworthy divine epithets can be found in line 704; God is called κτίστης ὁ δικαιοκρίτης τε μόναρχος<sup>32</sup>, creator, righteous judge and sovereign (refer to “The image of God” for full discussion). These epithets sum up the three aspects that have the most importance for the Sibyl. God created the world and therefore he is judge and sovereign over his creation. The three attributes complement one another. The theme of rule (ἀρχή/ἄρχω) is an important and recurring one in the Third Sibyl and is almost always attributed to the foreign nations. The attribution of the the epithet μόναρχος therefore sets the Jewish God apart from and over above all human rulers.<sup>33</sup> The epithet κτίστης, on the other hand, is a

<sup>27</sup> The term to explicitly refer to the Jewish people is εὐσεβεῖς which is evident from the respective context (cf. lines 213, 573, 769 and comments there).

<sup>28</sup> While the Sibyl uses a lot of general terminology like ἀγαθός and δίκαιος, the ones that stress ethical behaviour and obedience to the law are εὐσεβεῖς over against ἀναγνος (171, 203, 496–497, 695), ἄνομος (496, 763), and ἀσεβής (568).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Isa 49:1ff; 51:4–6.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. comments on lines 767ff and Part III: The divine dominion and Utopia in related literature.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Part III: The divine dominion and Utopia in related literature.

<sup>32</sup> First in Artapanus (Praep. ev. 9.27.5); occurs among other divine epithets that stress God's sovereignty in a prayer by the high priest Simon in 3 Macc 2:2. Philo stresses God's μοναρχία in contrast to Polytheism (cf. Philo, Her. 169; Decal. 31, 154; Spec. 2.224). It reflects a stoic background where the universe is governed by a single principle (cf. Cleanthes, Hymn to Zeus, 7–8). It is neither an epithet of Zeus nor used by Homer (Lightfoot, 2007, 542). Cf. Sib. Or. frg. i 17; Sib. Or. 3.11 (εἷς θεός ἐστι μόναρχος).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.121, 167, 172, 175, 177, 290, 400, 560, 608, 610, 660, 638, 743, 784.

common one attributed to the Jewish God.<sup>34</sup> The usage of the term indicates a Jewish background.<sup>35</sup> In the OT God being creator of heaven and earth is at the same time king of the world and king of the other Gods (see also Part III: The Image of God).<sup>36</sup>

## 8.4 The conversion of the nations

### 8.4.1 The nations realise that God loves his people (710-713)

710 καὶ τότε δὴ νῆσοι πᾶσαι πόλιές τ' ἐρέουσιν,  
 711 ὅπόσον ἀθάνατος φιλέει τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐκείνους.  
 712 πάντα γὰρ αὐτοῖσιν συναγωνιᾷ ἡδὲ βοηθεῖ,  
 713 οὐρανὸς ἡελίος τε θεήλατος ἡδὲ σελήνη.

And then all the island and cities shall say,  
 How much the immortal loves these men.  
 For everything brings them together and helps them,  
 heaven, God driven sun and moon.

The transition formula καὶ τότε δὴ makes it clear that the Sibyl is introducing a new passage. The focus shifts towards the nations. Due to his protection of the sons of God, all people will eventually acknowledge God and his law.

All islands and all cities shall say how much God loves (φιλέει) these people (710). The choice of the term φιλέω is rather unusual with God as subject. That God loves the people of Israel is expressed in Hos 3:1 with the term ἀγαπάω (καθὼς ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ). In the LXX the love of God towards his people and vice versa is generally expressed with the term ἀγαπάω.<sup>37</sup> The preference for ἀγαπάω is carried on by the NT: In the NT Jesus is God's beloved (ἀγαπητός) son.<sup>38</sup> The Sibyl's language cannot solely be read within a Jewish context. In outer-biblical literature - contrast the evidence from the LXX and the NT - φιλέω occurs much more frequently than ἀγαπάω.<sup>39</sup> In Homer, the love of the Gods towards men is expressed with φιλέω and conveys the meaning of election and benevolence.<sup>40</sup> In some cases, φιλέω adopts the specific meaning of 'to help' with regard to gods and their human friends.<sup>41</sup> Both Homeric meanings are expressed in the nations' statement about the love of God for his

<sup>34</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs 22:32; 2 Macc 1:24; 4 Macc 11:5; Sir 18:1; 24:8. Note that it has only one occurrence in the NT, namely in 1 Pet 4:19.

<sup>35</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 545.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ps 94:3. ὅτι θεὸς μέγας κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς θεοὺς.

<sup>37</sup> Deut 7:9, 10:14f. φιλέω has only 15 occurrences in the LXX while ἀγαπάω has 266.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 12:6.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. G. Stählin "φιλέω," TWNT 9:115.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 2.197; 16.94; Od. 15.245f.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 5.423.

people.<sup>42</sup> This is particularly interesting because the statement is made from the point of view of the nations. The Sibyl intentionally uses pagan terminology to express that the nations will realise God's love for his people.

God's love for his sons is an important aspect on the vertical line. The people's obedience and reverence is rewarded via God's benevolence and gifts.

#### 8.4.2 The islands and the cities - the ends of the earth

The phrase in line 710 (νησοι παῖσαι πόλιές τε) deserves attention. The use of merisms in the Third Sibyl has been observed.<sup>43</sup> However, the expression 'islands and cities' has not occurred so far. Other than in line 707, where cities and countryside were mentioned together, the islands and the cities of line 710 do not form a merism.<sup>44</sup>

It is also noteworthy that while in line 707 she uses ἄστυ for city, the Sibyl uses πόλις in line 710. LSJ notes that ἄστυ can refer to town in opposition to πόλις, the civic body.<sup>45</sup> However, it is unlikely that by πόλις the Sibyl is referring to the civic body. Rather than that, she intended the opposition of ἄστυ and χώρα in line 707.<sup>46</sup> Πόλις, on the other hand, is the preferred sibyllistic term.<sup>47</sup> It occurs 16 times in Sib. Or. 3 while ἄστυ has only two occurrences (lines 472 and 707). In light of the evidence, ἄστυ should be translated as town while πόλις should be translated as city. Obviously, the isles and cities in line 710 stand for the people that inhabit them. It is possible to see the phrase 'isles and cities' as an inclusive statement in the sense that it refers to the people who live in the cities (possible in those that were punished by God) and those who live on the islands off the coast. The Sibyl mentions several Mediterranean islands through the course of the book, particularly in lines 401-488 where she imitates Sibyls native to Asia Minor. She talks about Rhodes (444f), Astypalea (345), and Cyprus (457). Her interest in the islands is not surprising as the Mediterranean islands were of cultural and economic importance in Antiquity. In lines 168f the Phoenicians were said to have set foot on Asia and the other islands, i.e. the islands off the Asian coast.<sup>48</sup> For a Sibyl native to Asia Minor and the adjacent region (such as the Erythrean Sibyl), the islands have a very real socio-political setting and reference.

<sup>42</sup> It should be noted though that Philo uses the adjective θεοφιλής (divinely favoured) 73 times.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. the note on line 707 above.

<sup>44</sup> Contra Buitenwerf, 2003, 281.

<sup>45</sup> LSJ, "ἄστυ," 263.

<sup>46</sup> The opposition of ἄστυ and ἀγρός (country) is known from classical literature. Cf. Aristoph. Ach. 33.

<sup>47</sup> The term is also used frequently by the LXX with some 1472 occurrences.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Isa 23:2 (Phoenicians).

### 8.4.3 The isles of the nations in the LXX

Rather than a mere merism the phrase evokes biblical geography. The Sibyl's islands probably have their closest biblical analogy in Isa 42:10-12 and Zech 2:15. In the Hebrew Bible the islands traditionally belong to the sphere of the nations. This is based on the division of the earth after the deluge.<sup>49</sup> In the Hebrew Bible the term 'islands' usually designates places so distant that it qualifies as the ends of the earth.<sup>50</sup>

An expression similar to the one in line 710 can be found in Isa 42:10.<sup>51</sup> Isa speaks of the glorification of God to the ends of the earth and the islands. Isaiah's islands are a direct reference to Gen 10:5 where the isles of the nations (νῆσοι τῶν ἐθνῶν) are first mentioned. Within the Table of nations in Gen 10, the isles mark the spheres of the nations in the remote places of the earth. Isa 42:10-12 is also a hymn that speaks of the praise of God from the ends of the earth of which the islands are a part. From a Judean perspective, the islands lie far to the west. In Isa 42 the islands, along with the desert in the east, signify the ends of the earth that exalt JHWH whereas previously they had been punished (Isa 41:1-5). Within the context of the Sibyl, the islands and the cities share a similar fate. They too, as in Isa, were part of God's judgement and now exalt him. In Zeph 2:11 the islands are used in a similar fashion: the prophet appeals to all the nations of the earth, even to the islands of the nations, to fear God and abandon their idols. The phrase νῆσοι τῶν ἐθνῶν from Gen 10:5, 32 is recast here and displays the inhabitants of the remote Mediterranean regions as a representation for the farthest western corner of the world (as seen from a Palestinian perspective).<sup>52</sup> The Sibyl borrows the term νῆσοι (710) from biblical tradition and recasts it in her own way.

The Sibyl is certainly inspired by verses like Isa 41:2-5 and Zeph 2:11 even if her geographical perspective is different. The actual islands the Sibyl could have had in mind are those of the Mediterranean that were subject to God's judgement earlier in the book. From a Greek perspective of the time, Greece was divided in three main parts: northern Greece, the Peloponnese, and the Greek islands.<sup>53</sup> The islands of the western coast of Asia Minor, for instance, were commonly accounted to Asia Minor proper.<sup>54</sup> In the Mediterranean region the close relation of land and sea is the hallmark of landscape.<sup>55</sup> It is probable that the Sibyl is

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Gen 10:5, 32: νῆσοι τῶν ἐθνῶν.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Gen 10:5; Isa 40:15; 41:1, 5.

<sup>51</sup> Ὑμνήσατε τῷ κυρίῳ ὕμνον καινόν, ἡ ἀρχὴ αὐτοῦ· δοξάζετε τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' ἄκρου τῆς γῆς, οἱ καταβαίνοντες εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πλέοντες αὐτήν, αἱ νῆσοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες αὐτάς. For the motif cf. Isa 19:11; Zech 2:11; 14:16.

<sup>52</sup> Although it remains a matter of debate whether Zephania was indeed inspired by the priestly (P) table of nations. Cf. Irsigler, 2002, 276.

<sup>53</sup> Forbiger, 1966, 3, 567.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Forbiger, 1966, 2, 92ff.

<sup>55</sup> Joß, 2005, 172.

referring to the peoples of the Mediterranean region, i.e. those who inhabit the islands and the cities, both on land and sea. Those are the places that were judged by God for their insolence and that now turn to him because they realised that he protects those who revere him. This would explain the addition of the cities. The Sibyl picks up on the biblical topos of the islands as ends of the world and adds the cities to the list to reapply the traditional image to her scheme of judgement over the islands and cities of the Mediterranean laid out in lines 401-488. In other words, she is recasting biblical prophecy in the style of a “typical” Sibyl. The Sibyl makes use of a biblical topos in light of current geography.

The Sibyl’s indebtedness to the LXX and to Isaiah in particular is also evident from the hymn that follows, which is a rendition of Isa 2:2-5.

### 8.5 The hymns of the penitent nations (714-731)

715 ἡδὺν ἀπὸ στομάτων δὲ λόγον ἄξουσιν ἐν ὕμνοις.<sup>56</sup>

They will produce sweet language from their mouths in the form of hymns,

Line 714 introduces the hymn sung by the penitent nations in lines 716-723. Lines 716-723 and 725-731 are set in the first person plural. The two psalms are discontinued by a statement of the Sibyl in line 724. The songs are set in traditional imagery and are modelled on texts such as Ps 95-100 but particularly on Isa 2:2-5.

#### 8.5.1 The first hymn of the penitent nations: Gifts for the temple and universal acceptance of the law (716-720)

716 δεῦτε, πεσόντες ἅπαντες ἐπὶ χθονὶ λισσώμεσθα

717 ἀθάνατον βασιλῆα, θεὸν μέγαν ἀέναόν τε.

718 πέμπωμεν πρὸς ναόν, ἐπεὶ μόνος ἐστὶ δυνάστης·

719 καὶ νόμον ὑψίστοις θεοῦ<sup>57</sup> φραζώμεθα<sup>58</sup> πάντες,

720 ὅστε δικαιοτάτος πέλεται πάντων κατὰ γαῖαν.

Come on, let us all fall to the ground and pray  
to the Immortal king, the great and eternal God,  
Let us send to the temple, for he is the sole ruler.  
And let us all observe the law of the highest God,  
for it is the most righteous of all on earth.

<sup>56</sup> Line 714 is a repetition of line 675 (Geffcken, 1902, 84).

<sup>57</sup> For the epithet ὑψιστος see comment on line 519. It should be noted though that ὑψιστος θεός is put in the mouth of the Gentiles rather than just ὑψιστος. Mitchell has noted that there is a visible tendency in Hellenistic Jewish literature for θεός ὑψιστος to be used by Jews when addressing pagans and ὑψιστος alone when used internally (Mitchell, 1999, 110-111). Chances are the author used ὑψιστος θεός to stress the fact that the Gentiles will recognise God over their (false) gods.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Homer, Od. 17.161; 23.75.



The first song outlines in detail what has already been said about the nations in lines 710-15, namely that they will realise God's benevolence towards his people and turn to him as a result. The nations will finally acknowledge their place on the vertical line. At last they enter into relations with God thus taking part in the vertical line actively.

The hymns are particularly interesting with regard to the image of God in the Third Sibyl and also with regard to the relation of the nations to God and his people.

In her recent study on the Sibyllines, Lightfoot observed several reminiscences of LXX vocabulary and the evocation of specific biblical verses with regard to the two hymns.<sup>59</sup> Lightfoot compares line 716 to Ps 94:6 (catchword: δεῦτε), line 721 to Isa 53:6 (catchword: πλανάω) and lines 725-6 to Ps 94:1 (catchword: δεῦτε) and Isa 42:10 (catchword: ὕμνος). Her choice is but paradigmatic as she notes with regard to the figure δεῦτε: 'With the common figure δεῦτε with hortatory subjunctive, and a lexicon that combines basic biblical vocabulary with the substitution of synonyms, the Sibyl evokes the feel of psalmic prayer and confession without committing herself to individual passages.'<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, a few more possible allusions to scripture spring to mind as we have already seen with regard to the islands of the nations in Isa 42:2-5 and Zeph 2:11 above.

The people, i.e. the islands and cities of lines 710-715, now acknowledge God as ἄθάνατον βασιλῆα, θεὸν μέγαν ἀέναόν τε and will fall (πίπτω) upon the earth and pray (λίσσομαι) to him (716). Whereas in lines 545-550 the Sibyl accused Hellas (as a symbol for all nations) of putting her trust in mortal leaders, the penitent nations now acknowledge God as the immortal king.

The notion that in the end all nations will accept the sovereignty of God is paralleled in the Hebrew Bible and in other texts from the Second Temple period. Lines 716-17 particularly convey allusions to Isa 45:23 which appeals to the nations of the earth to repent and turn to God so that eventually all knees will bend to him and all tongues will swear to him.<sup>61</sup>

The denationalisation of monotheism is also expressed through the amalgam of pagan and Jewish divine epithets, such as ἄθάνατος, ἀέναος, and μέγας. Ἀθάνατος is not an epithet of God neither in the LXX nor in the NT but it does occur in pagan, Jewish, and Christian inscriptions from Asia Minor (with θεός).<sup>62</sup> The main feature that distinguished the Greek

<sup>59</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 231. Lightfoot identifies the hymns as sung by the righteous sons of God of line 702. I, on the other hand, do not share that opinion. It is obvious from the structure of the text that the hymns are put in the mouth of the converted nations.

<sup>60</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 231.

<sup>61</sup> ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ καὶ ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα τῷ θεῷ.

<sup>62</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 539. Cf. IJO II 186.20-1; MAMA 7 586; Mitchell, 1993, 48.

gods from men was their immortality (ἀθανασία).<sup>63</sup> The epithet is found throughout pseudepigraphic literature but particularly often in the Sibyllines.<sup>64</sup> While the Greek gods were distinguished from men by their immortality, the Sibyl speaks of them as dead idols and images (547, 588, 646, and 723). Ἀένας has a few occurrences in the LXX and Philo but is also attested to in pagan literature.<sup>65</sup> While μέγας in particular is an epithet of Zeus, ὁ θεὸς ὁ μέγας is a common phrase in the LXX.<sup>66</sup> The designation of God as king is likewise a common one in contemporary Jewish literature and in Greek religion.<sup>67</sup>

Lines 718-20 form one sentence. The nations acknowledge the sovereignty of God, the temple and the law. That God's sovereignty and the importance of the law are in tandem is a commonplace in Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>68</sup>

The nations say that they will send to the temple<sup>69</sup> because God is the *only* ruler; as such there can be no other ruler or temple. Both confessions evoke texts such as Zech 14:9 and Isa 37:16, 20 which speak of God's uniqueness and his universal dominion as lord over all kingdoms of the earth.<sup>70</sup> The statement that God is the only ruler elevates him above all earthly rulers who aspire to have dominion. In this line it is clear that the temple is a symbol of God's sovereignty rather than a mere sanctuary.

The image of the nations bringing gifts to the temple is a traditional one that is connected with the rebuilt or eschatological city of Jerusalem.<sup>71</sup> However, the motif of the nations bringing gifts to the Temple evokes Isa 2:3 in particular.<sup>72</sup> Isa 2:3-5 is a hymn put in the mouth of the nations that will go up to the mount of God and perform sacrifices within his Temple. As in lines 716 and 725 of Sib. Or. 3 the hymn is introduced with the interjection δεῦτε. In Isa the nations say that they shall go up to the temple (MT and LXX) whereas in the Sibyl's version they send to it.<sup>73</sup> The Sibyl is, again, using traditional imagery to express the

<sup>63</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 399.

<sup>64</sup> T. Ab. 1.16.2; 1.17.4; 1 Esd 7:1; Apoc. Sedr. 5.6; Sib. Or. 1.45, 50–51, 53, 56, 73, 122, 152, 167, 232, 331; 2.42, 47, 214, 219, 260, 287, 317, 332, 336; 3.10, 35, 48, 56, 101, 276, 278, 302, 328, 582, 594, 600–601, 604, 617, 631, 672, 676, 679, 709, 711, 717, 721, 733, 742, 759, 766, 771, 787; 4.192; 5.76, 411; 6.1; 7.76; 8.92, 213, 250, 315, 410; 11.36; 12.232, 294; 13.2; 14.1, 228; 22.1.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Deut 33:27; 2 Macc 7:36; Bar 5:7; Philo, Post., 151; Pindar, Ol. 14.12; Isodorus, Hymn to Isis 4.22.

<sup>66</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 542. Cf. Deut 10:17; Ezra 5:8; 18:6.

<sup>67</sup> For a thorough analysis see Camponovo, 1984 and Zimmermann, 2007. See also Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. 4 Macc 5:16–18, 20f, 24; Philo, Mos. 2.12; Let. Aris. 15.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Isa 18:7; 60; Mic 4:2; Tob 13:13.

<sup>70</sup> Zech 14:9: καὶ ἔσται κύριος εἰς βασιλεία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν· ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἔσται κύριος εἷς καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἓν; Isa 37:16b: ...σὺ θεὸς μόνος εἶ πάσης βασιλείας τῆς οἰκουμένης, σὺ ἐποίησας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν; Isa 37:20: σὺ δέ, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, σῶσον ἡμᾶς ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτῶν, ἵνα γνῶ πᾶσα βασιλεία τῆς γῆς ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ θεὸς μόνος. Cf. also 2Kgs 19:15; Dan 3:45.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Isa 2; Tob 13:13; Rev 21:24.

<sup>72</sup> The combination of the nations making processions to the temple and accepting the law can also be found in Mic 4:1–3.

<sup>73</sup> See also comment on lines 772–774.

great conversion. Rather than a procession to Jerusalem, the Sibyl may have donations or a tax in mind, not so unlike the one the Diaspora Jews paid to the temple annually. Josephus and other sources record that wealthy non-Jews would make donations to the temple to express their support.<sup>74</sup> This indicates that wealthy Jews in the Diaspora, unable to display their benefactions in local temples, commonly sent prestigious gifts to Jerusalem.<sup>75</sup> Whereas in the Hebrew Bible we find the concept that the nations will make pilgrimage to Mount Zion at the end of days<sup>76</sup>, the nations of the Sibyl send to the temple. Chances are this reflects the reality of Diaspora Judaism where few Jews were financially capable of visiting the city and the temple so that they paid their respect via the annual temple tax or generous donations.

The nations further acknowledge that they will observe the law of the highest God (719) because it is the most just (δικαιότατος) law on earth (720). It is noteworthy that the two superlatives are parallel; the highest God corresponds to the most just law. It is grammatically possible to interpret lines 720 as a relative clause qualifying the Highest God in line 719. However, the designation κατὰ γὰρ<sup>77</sup> as well as the partitive genitive πάντων make this interpretation unlikely.

It should also be noted here that in line 496 and 763 the nations are called lawless (ἄνομος).<sup>78</sup> The Sibyl, like Rom 1 and Wis 13, presumes that essential law is known to everyone by nature and that therefore the nations are generally capable of keeping the law but chose not to (cf. 599-600).<sup>79</sup> The cardinal sin, as we have already observed, is idolatry.<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, the basic requirement for conversion and salvation from judgement is the recognition of God's dominion and his law, which is the most just of all laws. The law is essential for the vertical line. It facilitates the connection between men and God. Now that the nations accept the law they too will have a share in the future blissfulness.<sup>81</sup>

Isa 2 also knows the combination of the gifts to the temple and the law. In Isa 2 Zion is the place to which the Gentiles will pilgrimage and from which the law shall go out for all the nations of the world.<sup>82</sup> In Isa 2:1-5 the motif that the converts realise the truth about God and his law is likewise traditional. It has its origins in the Zionist theology which says that at the

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Josephus, Ant. 18.82; 20.49-50; B.J. 4.567; 5.55, 201-205; Cf. Tacitus, Hist. 5.5.1; Acts 2.5-11; b. Yoma 38a. Cf. also comment on lines 767ff.

<sup>75</sup> Barclay, 1996, 419.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Isa 2:2-4 (// Mic 4:1-4); 60; 66:20; Hag 2; Zech 1:16; 4:9-10; 6:12-13; 8:22; 14:6f.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 282.

<sup>78</sup> It is not entirely clear who the addressees of line 763 are. It is possible that the Sibyl has all lawless in mind, be it gentile or Jew.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Isa 2:3.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 82-83; Collins, 2000, 162.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Wis 18:4; Tob 14:6f; Philo, Virt. 199; Mos. 2.44; Rom 2:14.

<sup>82</sup> ἐκ γὰρ Σιων ἐξελεύσεται νόμος καὶ λόγος κυρίου ἐξ Ἱερουσαλημ. (Isa 2:3b).

end of days all nations will make pilgrimage to Mount Zion and accept God as the only sovereign.<sup>83</sup>

In the case of the Sibyl, the traditional procession to Jerusalem had faded from view.<sup>84</sup> In the Sibyl, the temple and the law are central alike. This reflects the reality of Diaspora Judaism. Collins notes that ‘the tension between the universalistic understanding of the law and the particularistic attachment to the land and temple is quite typical of Diaspora Judaism’<sup>85</sup>. In the Third Sibyl the particularistic and the universalistic blend into one so that the temple eventually becomes the temple for all (penitent) people regardless of their nationality. This conviction is shared by no less than Philo.<sup>86</sup>

The obvious absence of the land in the Third Sibyl is a striking difference compared to what we believe to know about the convictions of the Jewish Diaspora. Sending gifts to the temple rather than going to it reflects the reality of Diaspora Judaism. The return to the land and the city is no longer essential to the beliefs of Diaspora Judaism which did not see its situation as divine retribution.

The law occupies a central position *especially* outside the homeland. This is a concept which was already developed amongst the exiled in Babylon and which would come to dominate post-exilic scripture. The temple, on the other hand, remained geographically central for all of Judaism (except perhaps Elephantine and Leontopolis) up until its destruction in 70 CE. That Diaspora Judaism survived the destruction of the Temple indicates the strength of its other resources.<sup>87</sup> The centrality of the law was, in my opinion, its major strength long before the temple lay in ruins. The spatial centrality of the land may have lessened in a Diaspora where only those who could afford to do so would travel to Jerusalem for the major festivals.

### 8.5.2 The law and the temple

It is noteworthy that the Temple and the law are mentioned together so closely in order to highlight their centrality and possibly their interdependence. That the law and the temple are in tandem has already been observed.<sup>88</sup> Like the law, the temple occupies a central position on the vertical line. It is the symbol for correct worship and God’s sovereignty.

---

<sup>83</sup> Cf Isa 2:1-5.

<sup>84</sup> In Zeph 2:11 the name Jerusalem/Zion is likewise omitted which hints to a certain relativisation of its centrality and towards a universalism that is also reflected in Mal 1:11 and Isa 19:18-25 both of which probably stem from the Hellenistic period. Cf. Irsigler, 2002, 277.

<sup>85</sup> Collins, 2000, 165.

<sup>86</sup> Philo, Mos. 2.44.

<sup>87</sup> Barclay, 1996, 420.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. lines 218-294, 573-5.

In Isa 2:3f, the going forth of the law out of Jerusalem will put an end to all war ('swords into plough-shares'). In the Sibyl, the nations acceptance of the law makes way for the establishment of the divine dominion on earth and the end of all war (see also comment on lines 767ff below). Isaiah and the Sibyl share the idea that the observation of the law by the nations (!) will bring about the peaceful period. The idea is paralleled in the works of Philo.<sup>89</sup>

Most importantly, however, the repentant complete these (aforementioned) tasks and activities because they realise that God is *μόνος δυνάστης*, the only ruler. Finally, after centuries of war and struggle for world dominion the nations realise that only God holds true power and dominion. The supplication under the dominion of God is tied to the obedience of the law.<sup>90</sup> The difference between the people of God and the nations is nullified because they will adhere to the same law and pray to the same God. Both now have their place on the vertical line. This is the fulfilment of the prophecy in lines 194-195 that the people of God would be moral guides (through their law observance) for all mankind.

### 8.5.3 The law as the way of God (721-723)<sup>91</sup>

721 ἡμεῖς δ' ἀθανάτοιο τρίβου πεπλανημένοι ἤμεν,  
722 ἔργα δὲ χειροποίητα σεβάσμεθα ἄφρονι θυμῷ  
723 εἰδῶλα ξόανά τε καταφθιμένων ἀνθρώπων.

We have strayed from the path of the Immortal,  
And with foolish mind revered things made by human hand  
Images and statues of deceased people.

In lines 721-24 the newly converted repent for their idolatry<sup>92</sup>. They assert they had gone astray (*πλανάω*) from the path of God (*ἀθανάτοιο τρίβος*). The verb *πλανάω* is frequently used by the Sibyl to denote idolatry. In her history of the people of God the Sibyl heralded that they would be led into exile should they be led astray.<sup>93</sup>

The image is familiar from the Hebrew Bible and LXX. In the so-called last Servant Song in Isa 53:6 the Israelites acknowledge that they have gone astray from the way of God. Here too the verb *πλανάω* is used. In the Sibyl, however, the motif is transferred unto the nations. In the aforementioned hymn in Isa 2:2-5 the nations say that they shall go up to the mount of the God in order to be taught his way (*ὁδός*) and walk in it. Walking in the ways of God is an

<sup>89</sup> Philo, Mos. 2.44. Cf. Philo, Praem. 165ff.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Jub. 12.19; 2 Macc 1:7; 4:11,17, 5:8 where Jason's apostasy from kingship signifies his apostasy from the dominion of God. Jason's apostasy is the deviation from the law; Ps 92, 98; Wis 6:3f. where the failure of the kings is reasoned by their failure to keep the law. Cf. also Camponovo, 1984, 187f.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. also comments on lines 777-779.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. lines 228; 275-279, 545-550, 586-590, 601-607.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. line 276 and comments there.

ethical condition.<sup>94</sup> Again, it is evident that the hymn is modelled on that in Isaiah 2 in particular. Deut 5:32-6:3 also describes the keeping of the law as a movement, a way not just towards the Promised Land but towards a special relation with God. In Deut 5:33 Moses admonishes the people: “You shall walk in the way that God has commanded you”<sup>95</sup> so that you will live and prosper and that your days will be prolonged in the land that you will possess” (my translation). The way does not end in the Promised Land but the observance of the law is understood as a lifelong way<sup>96</sup> that defines Israel’s special relation with God. Deut 5:33 is written from a post-exilic perspective<sup>97</sup> that copes the experience of losing the land. The land is not for taken for granted, it is earned by walking in the way of God. In the Third Sibyl, the way of God has lost its affinity to the land altogether. However, the Sibyl also knows that disobedience to the law, i.e. abandoning the way of God, has led to the loss of the land and the temple (see comments on line 265-291). The way of God, i.e. observing the law, leads to the manifestation of God’s dominion on earth and one’s place in it. The nations can partake in this special relation. Philo likewise does not focus on the giving of the law to Israel as a onetime event, but rather as a continuous revelation to all mankind.<sup>98</sup>

The Sibyl picks up on the tradition of walking in the way of God to illustrate her claim about God's world dominion. God is the only true king but because the nations do not accept this, they wage war against one another claiming world dominion for themselves. Even though in the understanding of the Sibyl God always has been the sole ruler, it will only be in the end that all men acknowledge this fact. The eschatological age is connected with the final intervention of God and his dominion. The Sibyl shares this aspect with the biblical prophets and Philo.<sup>99</sup> The difference between the present and the end of days is that God will rule in a way that vouchsafes weal for his people and that his dominion will be visible to all people who will accept him as the sole ruler.<sup>100</sup>

#### 8.5.4 The end of the first hymn (line 724)

724 ταῦτα βοήσουσιν ψυχὰι πιστῶν ἀνθρώπων·  
Thus will the souls of the faithful men cry out.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Gen 18:19; Deut 9:16; Judg 2:22; 2 Sam 22:22; 1 Kgs 16:26 (the kings of Israel walk in the ways of Jeroboam and ignore God); 2 Kgs 21:22; Isa 2:3; 40:3; 51:6; 55:7-9 (the wicked is urged to forsake his sinful way); Jer 5:4-5; Hos 14:10; Ps 1:6 (way of the wicked); 18:22; 138:5; Prov 10:29; 2 Chr 17:6.

<sup>95</sup> LXX: κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἐνετείλατό σοι κύριος ὁ θεός σου πορεύεσθαι.

<sup>96</sup> Geiger, 2010, 141.

<sup>97</sup> On the complex dating and composition of Deuteronomy see Otto, 2012, 18-280.

<sup>98</sup> Holtz, 2007, 391f; Cf. Borgen, 1997, 143. Cf. Comments on lines 234-244; 721-24; 757ff; 767ff. See also Geiger, 2010 who discusses the same concept for Deuteronomy.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Ezek 20:33; Isa 52:7; Mic 2:13; 4:7; Zeph 3:15; Zech 16:9; Obad 21; Philo, Mos. 2.44.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Camponovo, 1984, 116.

A break occurs in line 724. The first song of the nations ends and the Sibyl switches back from the third to the first person. Line 724 furthermore serves as a transition to the second hymn in lines 725-731.

The hymn ends in line 724 with a statement of the Sibyl that thus the souls of the faithful men will cry out (ψυχὰι πιστῶν ἀνθρώπων). The word πιστός has only one other occurrence in the Third Sibyl, namely in 775. There it is said that at the end of time there will be no temple other than the one that God gave the πιστοὶ ἄνδρες. In both passages the Sibyl deliberately chooses πιστός over εὐσεβής because she wants to make it clear that the reference is not to the people of God, but to all faithful people. It can therefore be concluded that this includes the repentant Gentiles.

From Wis 3:1 we learn the the ψυχὰι δικαίων are in the hand of God and will not be harmed.<sup>101</sup> Wis, like the Sibyl, does not use the terms Judeans, Jews or Israel. Wis differentiates between righteous (δίκαιος) and impious (ἀσεβής) just like the Sibyl differentiates between pious (εὐσεβής/πιστός) and impious (ἀσεβής/ἀναγνος). According to Josephus, εὐσέβεια is living and acting according to the law which is the will of God.<sup>102</sup>

Those who turn to God and supplicate themselves under his law receive the label pious (πιστός) while the people of God are singled out as εὐσεβεῖς to begin with. The people of God have a special relationship with God because the law was given to them explicitly. Scholars up to now seem to have missed the point that the Sibyl herself never speaks of Jews (Ἰουδαῖοι) or anything related (such as Israel or Judea). Barclay notes that 'the Jews' very name (Ἰουδαῖοι) linked Jews to the land (Ἰουδαία) from which they could be thought to derive.<sup>103</sup> The omission of the ethnic marker and link is all the more curious. The Sibyl makes a distinction not by ethnos but by ethical categories - that is by moral means, by way of life and state of mind. It is the foreign nations but most prominently the Romans (and the Greeks for that matter) who are depicted as impious and arrogant. They are said to bring strife and war upon the people because they do not turn to God and his law. War was first brought upon men by the hubristic Titan kings, the ancestors of the Greeks. I have also discussed that the source for men's hubris, which causes them to wage war, is idolatry and the disregard for God and his law. This concept is tied to the Sibyl's perception of the world and its dominion as a whole. Dominion is incumbent upon God alone. Empires remain in power, which is granted by God, for a certain amount of time until they become hubristic and greedy and they are destroyed.<sup>104</sup> The concept of human hubris and downfall is visible here.<sup>105</sup> It is at that point that the nations are punished and destroyed by God. Hence the people of God stand over against the nations not because they are the superior people by election but because they have the superior way of life, a way of life that is laid out by the law to be guides in life for all mankind. According to Greek state theory the superiority of the ethically superior over others was completely justified.<sup>106</sup> By contrast, the Sibyl repeatedly urges the Greeks to convert to God (cf. lines 545-572, 624-551, 732-40) and his law so that they will be saved from judgement. In that sense the Sibyl has a more universalistic approach than most of the biblical texts which exclusively aim at the

<sup>101</sup> Cf. comment on line 708.

<sup>102</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2. 144-146, 170-171, 180, 184. See also Part III: The law and Utopia.

<sup>103</sup> Barclay, 1996, 422.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. 2 Macc 2:17-18; Pss. Sol. 2:28ff.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. lines 202-205a, 352, 455, 520, 552, 529; cf. Josephus, Ant. 1.194; 18.88.

<sup>106</sup> See also Part III: Philo and the Golden Age. Cf. Holtz, 2007, 153.

restoration of the Judeans. In the Diaspora inscriptions and other data attest for proselytes and so-called god-fearers that were attracted to Judaism.<sup>107</sup>

While the term εὐσεβής exclusively refers to the people of God, the penitent nations are πιστοί (724) because they serve the right God and adopt his νομός (719-720). In line 724 the faithful people are first introduced as being penitent nations, in line 775 there is no longer a difference between the people of God and the nations so that πιστοὶ ἄνδρες refers to all people who will live to be a part of God's dominion. Again it comes to the fore that the Sibyl does not differentiate by ethnic means but rather by state of mind and way of life. Serving the right God and keeping his law lead to salvation whereas trust in mortal kings and false gods lead to impiety and destruction. Ἀσέβεια, ἄδικος and ἄνομος are recurring terms in the book used to describe the Romans, the Greeks, and the nations as a whole and along with it an admonition to forsake their ways in order to escape judgement.<sup>108</sup>

#### 8.5.5 The second hymn of the penitent nations (725-731)

725 δεῦτε, θεοῦ κατὰ δῆμον ἐπὶ στομάτεσσι πεσόντες  
 726 τέρψωμεν ὕμνοισι θεὸν γενετῆρα κατ' οἴκους<sup>109</sup>,  
 727 ἐχθρῶν ὅπλα ποριζόμενοι κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν  
 728 ἐπτὰ χρόνων μήκη περιτελλομένων ἐνιαυτῶν,  
 729 ἐέλτας καὶ θυρεοὺς κόρυθας παμποικιλὰ θ' ὅπλα,  
 730 πολλὰ τε καὶ τόξων πληθὺν βελέων ἀδίκων τε·  
 731 οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκ δρυμοῦ ξύλα κόψεται εἰς πυρὸς αὐγὴν.

Come on, let us fall on our faces throughout the people of God,  
 And let us delight with hymns God, the begetter, in every house,  
 gathering the weapons of the enemies from the entire earth  
 for seven lengths of time of circling years,  
 light shields, long shields, helmets and many kinds of weapons  
 a large number and a multitude of bows and unrighteous arrows.  
 And no trees will be felled from the wood to light a fire.

A second song starts in line 725 which is likewise introduced with the figure δεῦτε.<sup>110</sup> The implied singers of the hymn still are the penitent nations. This is evident from line 724 which serves as a transition from the first hymn to the second. Line 724 concludes the first hymn

<sup>107</sup> IJO II 14, 168. Cf. Wander, 1998.

<sup>108</sup> Sib. Or. 3.183, 184 (of Rome), 362 (of Rome), 496, 498 (of the Phoenicians), 730 (of Greece), 763 (reader addressed).

<sup>109</sup> It is possible that the plural οἴκοι is used to refer to the temple. The same is done in line 772 where it has a clear denominator (μεγάλοιο θεοῦ) which is lacking here. However, throughout the people and throughout the temple would be a sensible rendering. On the other hand, οἴκοι might as well refer to 'our homes' (Collins, 1983, 378) or 'every house' (Merkel, 2003, 1105). Κατὰ + accusative can also take on a distributive function (cf. BDR § 224.3) so that the phrase can also mean 'in every house'.

<sup>110</sup> Kurfēß, 1954, 107 followed by Gauger, 1998, 107 regards the second song as secondary and excludes it from his text. However, there is no reason to do so.



and introduces the second. It can therefore be concluded that the *ψυχὰι πιστῶν ἀνθρώπων* are the subject of the hymn.

In line 725 the penitent refers to the *δῆμος θεοῦ* (people of God) whereas the Sibyl referred to them as *ἔθνος μέγαλοιο θεοῦ*<sup>111</sup>. In the LXX *δῆμος* means 'family' or 'household'<sup>112</sup> rather than 'people'<sup>113</sup>. Only in Dan *δῆμος* is used in relation to God. In 9:16 Daniel addresses God speaking of *δῆμός σου*. The second hymn highlights the inseparable connection between God and those he loves wherefore the loved ones (cf. line 711) are called *δῆμος θεοῦ* by the Gentiles that now acknowledge God's dominion.

The preposition *κατά* in line 725 is a difficult one. Buitenwerf argues that *πίπτω (...) κατά* means to subordinate oneself to someone.<sup>114</sup> However, the preposition *κατά* with *δῆμος* in the accusative indicates that the Gentiles are not falling *before* the people as *κατά* never takes on that meaning. In fact, as in lines 716-717 they fall down and praise God as is evident from line 726 which is structured parallel to line 717. Rather than falling before the people, the preposition indicates that they are falling *throughout or along with* the *δῆμος θεοῦ*.<sup>115</sup> Merkel renders 'gemäß des Gottesvolkes'<sup>116</sup> (according to the people of God) which indicates that the penitent nations will act in the same fashion as the people of God rather than in the spatial sense.

Furthermore, and this is probably the most evident argument, the phrase *κατὰ δῆμον* corresponds to *κατ' οἶκους* in line 726. In both cases *κατά* does not refer to the object or person to which they will fall and pray but the place (or space for that matter) in which this is done, i.e. *throughout* the people of God and *throughout* every house.

Lines 725 -726 correspond to lines 716-17 with regard to their structure and contents. In the latter, the nations say with hortatory subjunctive: 'Let us all fall to the earth and pray to the immortal king.' In line 725, on the other hand, the same hortatory structure is used, only this time they say they will fall throughout (*κατά*) the people. The following diagram shall illustrate the strong similarities in wording as well as structure (bold means verbatim, underline means analogous structure and italics means analogous structure in the same text).

<sup>111</sup> Line 194 cf. 255, 657 (λαός).

<sup>112</sup> It translates the Hebrew *הַקָּהָל*. Cf. Num 1:22-42; 2:34; 3:15, 18-21 et al.

<sup>113</sup> Only in the texts from the Hellenistic age, most of which have no Hebrew equivalent, *δῆμος* means people. Cf. Jdt 4:8; 6:1; 8:18; 1 Macc 8:29; 12:6; 14:20-25; 15:17; 2 Macc 4:48; 11:34; Wis 6:4; Dan 8:24; 9:16; 11:23, 32.

<sup>114</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 283. However, in the two references that he uses, namely 2 Sam 14:33 and Jdt 4:11 the phrase *κατὰ πρόσωπον* + genitive is used. In the case of 2 Sam 14:33 this is the rendering of the Hebrew *לפני*; at the face or front of, the most general word for in the presence of, before (BDB). Since the expression *κατὰ πρόσωπον* cannot be found here, this translation can be refuted.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Collins, 1983, 378.

<sup>116</sup> Merkel, 2003, 1105.

716 “δεῦτε, πесόντες ἅπαντες ἐπὶ χθονὶ  
λισσώμεσθα

717 ἄθάνατον βασιλῆα, θεὸν μέγαν ἀέναόν τε.

725 “δεῦτε, θεοῦ κατὰ δῆμον ἐπὶ  
στομάτεσσι **πесόντες**

726 τέρψωμεν ὕμνοισι **θεὸν γενετήρα**  
κατ’ οἴκους

The outline above shows that lines 716-717 and 725-726 are parallel structured which is especially prominent through the repetition of the figure δεῦτε and the verb πίπτω.

The δῆμος θεοῦ does not occupy a political position of one people ruling another. Rather than that, the hymn is the fulfilment of lines 194-195 where the people of God are described as being moral guides for all mortals. The people of God too bend their knee to God. The two hymns are therefore not about the position of the people of God as political superiors. Rather, they focus on the love of God for those that revere him and accept him as the sole ruler in relation to the nations' recognition of that circumstance at the end of days. Although the Sibyl is speaking of an eschatological event, she implies that anyone who repents will partake in God's future dominion.

The nation's recognition of God has a two-fold structure; in line 717 God's role as king (βασιλεύς) is highlighted while line 726 highlights God role as creator (γενετήρ).<sup>117</sup> In biblical tradition, God is sovereign because he is the creator. Since creation was brought about by God's defeat of the forces of chaos he established his right to dominion.<sup>118</sup> The chaotic struggle is also the topic of Hesiod's Theogony which the Sibyl renders in her euhemeristic account of the Titanomachy.<sup>119</sup>

The rest of the hymn evokes a prophecy from Ezek 39:9-10: The penitent will collect the enemy's weapons and turn it into firewood for the needs of seven years.<sup>120</sup> This corresponds to lines 702-709 which spoke of a peaceful life for the sons of God. The collection of enemy weapons and their utilisation as firewood marks the end of a period of war. As in Isa 2:3 (see above) the observation of the law by the Gentiles<sup>121</sup> will bring about the peaceful period.

To conclude, the two hymns have a parallel structure and complement each other. The first one is about the approval of the universal divine dominion by the nations while the second hymn speaks of the end of war<sup>122</sup> which will be brought about providing that the nations recognised God's sovereignty. The hymns mark the fulfilment of the prophecy in lines 194-

<sup>117</sup> See Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>118</sup> The idea of creation as struggle between different gods is a common one in the ANE and is first attested in the *Enuma elish* (ca. 1250 BCE). Cf. Gen 1; Job 38:1-11; 40-41; Ps 74:12-18 MT (73:12-18 LXX); 89;10ff MT (88:10ff LXX); Isa 27:1. Cf. Keel/Schroer, 2002, 123ff.

<sup>119</sup> See comments in section I.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 283.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. lines 719-720.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. lines 727-731.

195. The people of God have fulfilled their role on the vertical line by being guides for all mortals. Because they are such a good example for the nations in keeping the law, the nations finally realise that they too must turn to God.

### 8.6 Third admonition of the Greeks (732-740)

732 ἀλλά, τάλαιν' Ἑλλάς, ὑπερήφανα παῦε φρονοῦσα·  
 733 λίσσεο δ' ἀθάνατον μεγαλήτορα καὶ προφύλαξαι·  
 734 στείλον μὴ ἐπὶ τήνδε πόλιν σὸν λαὸν ἄβουλον,  
 735 ὅστε μὴ ἐξ ὀσίης γαίης πέλεται Μεγάλοιο.  
 736 μὴ κίνει Καμάριναν· ἀκίνητος γὰρ ἀμείνων·  
 737 ἀρδαλιν ἐκ κοίτης· μή τοι κακὸν ἀντιβολήσῃ·  
 738 ἀλλ' ἀπέχου, μηδ' ἴσχ' ὑπερήφανον ἐν στήθεσσιν  
 739 θυμὸν ὑπερφίαλον, στείλας πρὸς ἀγῶνα κραταίον.  
 740 καὶ δούλευε θεῷ μεγάλῳ, ἵνα τῶνδε μετάρχησῃ.

But wretched Hellas, cease your arrogance.  
 Pray to the big-hearted Immortal and beware.  
 Avoid sending against this city your people void of council,  
 which is not from the righteous land of the Great One.  
 Do not disturb Camarina, for it is better undisturbed,<sup>123</sup>  
 (do not disturb) a leopard from its lair lest evil befall you,  
 but keep away from it. Do not have a proud, arrogant spirit  
 in your breasts, prepare for a forceful battle.  
 Serve the great God, so that you will have a share in this.

There is another break in line 732. The Sibyl switches to the second person singular in an appeal to the Greeks. The Greeks are admonished not to join the nations in their final attack on the pious in order that they may evade God's judgement.<sup>124</sup> Again, Greece is addressed in the second person. The Greeks are admonished to cease their arrogance (ὑπερηφανία). Throughout the book, the Greek kings are repeatedly described as arrogant and impious. In line 739 their arrogance (ὑπερφίαλος) is mentioned yet again. It is the same term that is used throughout the book to describe their overbearing.<sup>125</sup>

The Sibyl urges the Greeks to pray to the big-hearted Immortal. The adjective μεγαλήτωρ is Homeric.<sup>126</sup> However, the Sibyl uses it to demonstrate God's forgiving side. The verb λίσσομαι (to pray) was used in line 716 by the penitent nations, the nations that recognised God's power and turned to him. The Sibyl picks up on the term in order to single out the Greeks in particular. Addressing the Greeks is part of the fiction of the book.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>123</sup> This is derived from a well-known Greek proverb. See Servius on Virgil, Aen. 3.700; Lucian, Pseudol. 32. Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 284 n. 110-112.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. lines 663-668.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. lines 171, 202.

<sup>126</sup> Homer, Il. 16.257 (of Patroklos), Od. 10.200 (of Cyclops). Cf. also Sib. Or. 1.72.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 284. Cf. lines 663-668, 809-810.

The Sibyl warns the Greeks not to send troops against 'this city' and the land of the Great one. As in line 663 where it said 'this land' the reference is to 'this city' (ἐπὶ τήνδε πόλιν) rather than Jerusalem, the city's name is carefully omitted. In line 735 it is said that the Greeks are not from the holy land (γῆ) of the great one. That the Greeks do not stem from Israel is clear and seems to be redundant to mention. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the Sibyl is not referring to their ethnic origin but to their state of mind, which is their arrogance (ὕπερηφανία) and their being void of council (ἄβουλος). In line 721 the penitent nations acknowledge that they went astray from the way of God. Not being from the land of the Great One has a similar symbolic connotation. The reference to the land is again obscured by the omission of a geographical denominator. While the Sibyl is recasting traditional material she is de-emphasising the national aspect of biblical eschatology in order to better apply it to Diaspora Judaism and to her own role as a pagan prophetess.

The Greeks are called a people void of council (ἄβουλος), which refers to their ignorance towards the law.<sup>128</sup> Implicitly, the Sibyl discriminates between the pious people of God, who live according to the divine will, and the Greeks, who do not.<sup>129</sup> The pious, on the other hand, heed the will (βουλή) of God which means the law.<sup>130</sup> In line 590 the idolaters were accused of being void of βουλή. Being ignorant towards the law is a metaphor for practicing idolatry in the Third Sibyl; the two things are interdependent in the mind of the Sibyl. In line 738 the Greeks are once more requested not to be arrogant. Throughout the book, the notion that arrogance leads to war and destruction has repeatedly been displayed.

In the remainder of the passage the Greeks are admonished to serve God so that they may have a share in future happiness and not to join the kings in their assault (740).<sup>131</sup> The passage closes with an appeal to the Greeks to serve the Great God so that they may have a share in these (i.e. the good) circumstances that the Sibyl heralds in the next passages. The Greeks are invited to take up a place on the vertical line and ultimately in the divine dominion to which the vertical line leads.<sup>132</sup>

## 8.7 A prediction of judgement (741-743)

741 ὁπότε δὴ καὶ τοῦτο λάβῃ τέλος αἰσιμον ἡμαρ,<sup>133</sup>  
 742 εἰς δὲ βροτοῦς ἥξει κρίσις ἀθανάτοιο θεοῖο,  
 743 ἥξει ὑπ' ἀνθρώπους μεγάλη κρίσις ἥδὲ καὶ ἀρχή.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Cf. comment on line 590.

<sup>129</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 284.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. lines 220, 574, 584.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. comment on lines 657-668.

<sup>132</sup> See also comments on lines 744-756 below.

<sup>133</sup> Line 741 is a variation of line 569 (Buitenwerf, 2003, 285).

When the destined day comes to an end,  
The judgement of the Immortal God will come upon mortals,  
Great judgement and rule will come upon men.

The introduction ὁπότε δὴ makes it clear that this is the beginning of a new section, speaking of things that will happen in an undisclosed future. The exhortation of the Greeks is followed by the prediction of God's final judgment. The passage foreshadows what will happen when the day of judgement comes to an end (741).

The combination of κρίσις and ἀρχή in line 743 characterises God's intervention, he is the sole ruler (in contrast to the faulty human kings) and hence he will judge, so that both judgement and rule will come from him. The notion that God is judge and ruler has already come to the fore in line 704. The line also foreshadows lines 767-68 where it is said that God will establish his eternal kingship on earth after judgement has come to pass (see comment there). Ruling and judging are two aspects of kingship so that the king was also the judge.<sup>135</sup>

## 8.8 The Golden Age (744-757a)

744 γῇ γὰρ παγγενέτειρα βροτοῖς δώσει τὸν ἄριστον  
745 καρπὸν ἀπειρέσιον σίτου οἴνου καὶ ἐλαίου  
746 αὐτὰρ ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν μέλιτος γλυκεροῦ ποτὸν ἡδύ  
747 δένδρεά τ' ἀκροδρύων καρπὸν καὶ πίονα μῆλα  
748 καὶ βόας ἔκ τ' οἴων ἄρνας αἰγῶν τε χιμάρους·  
749 πηγὰς τε ῥήξει<sup>136</sup> γλυκερὰς λευκοῖο γάλακτος·  
750 πλήρεις δ' αὖτε πόλεις ἀγαθῶν καὶ πίονες ἄγροί  
751 ἔσσοντ'· οὐδὲ μάχαιρα κατὰ χθονὸς οὐδὲ κυδοιμός·  
752 οὐδὲ βαρὺ στενάχουσα σαλεύσεται οὐκέτι γαῖα·  
753 οὐ πόλεμος οὐδ' αὖτε κατὰ χθονὸς ἀνχμὸς ἔτ' ἔσται,  
754 οὐ λιμὸς καρπῶν τε κακορρέκτειρα χάλαζα·  
755 ἀλλὰ μὲν εἰρήνη μεγάλη κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν,  
756 καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλῆι φίλος μέχρι τέρματος ἔσται  
757a αἰῶνος...

For the earth, mother of all, will give mortals the best  
fruit in abundance (consisting) of grain, wine and oil,  
a delicious drink of sweet honey will come from heaven,  
fruit trees will bear fruit and fat sheep,  
cows, lambs of sheep and kids of goats.  
He will break open sweet sources of white milk

<sup>134</sup> Lines 741-743 are only preserved in quotations by Lactantius (Lactantius, Inst. 7.20.1). According to Geffcken, line 742 is a doublet of line 743. Gauger omits line 743 instead of 742 (Gauger, 1998, 106) while Buitenerwerf (2003, 285) takes both lines to have belonged to the original text. I follow Geffcken's reading.

<sup>135</sup> Lied, 2008, 66 n. 32. Cf. 1 Kgs 3:28; Test. Mos. 2.2; Ezek. Trag. 1.86; Sib. Or. 3.286-287.

<sup>136</sup> The third person probably refers to God as cause of these things. Grammatically it would be possible to understand the third person as a reference to the earth in line 744, however, in line 746 it was said that things would come from heaven (ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν) which is a reference to God.

There will be no swords and no cry of battle on earth.  
 And the earth will no longer be shaken, lamenting.  
 There will be no longer war or drought on earth,  
 no famine, and no hail to damage fruits.  
 The cities and the rich fields will be full of good things.  
 Instead, there will be a great peace on the entire earth,  
 and king will be friends with king at the end of time...

The brief passage on judgement is discontinued by a prophecy about paradisiacal circumstances.<sup>137</sup> According to the structure of the book this will be brought about after the judgement of the wicked in lines 741-43. The structure, namely judgement and its reversal is analogous to that commonly found in the biblical prophets and also in the Oracle of the Potter which describes the return of the water of the Nile and fertility after a period of calamities.<sup>138</sup> The predictions made in this passage foreshadow the descriptions of the divine dominion in lines 777-795.<sup>139</sup> The section recalls both a Garden of Eden and a Promised Land setting.<sup>140</sup>

Much of what is said in this passage is in fact a reversal of judgement predictions that were made earlier: The earth will yield its fruit again<sup>141</sup> and will no longer be shaken (lines 747-49, 753 cf. 675); there will be no swords and war<sup>142</sup> and famine will cease (lines 755-757a cf. lines 601-4), cities and fields will be full of good things and be rich (line 750 cf. 642 and 647), and the harvest will no longer be damaged by hail (line 754 cf. 690-92). In the Hebrew Bible the motif that the earth will be abundant and fruitful is common in descriptions first of the Promised Land and then of the eschatological age.<sup>143</sup>

Line 746 speaks of a drink of sweet honey from heaven, ambrosia.<sup>144</sup> These descriptions not only resemble biblical prophecies but also descriptions of the Golden Age in classical Greek texts.<sup>145</sup> Line 746 exemplifies that these things come from heaven, i.e. from God (ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν). In lines 672 and 691 judgement came from heaven, now it is the good things that come from there. This highlights that God is the originator of both weal and woe and that he directs things from heaven, his abode. This is well in line with what is said about the gods

<sup>137</sup> Cf. lines 367-372, 619-623.

<sup>138</sup> P<sub>2</sub> 19-48; P<sub>3</sub> 39-76. See also comment on lines 652-656.

<sup>139</sup> See comments there.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Lev 26; Amos 9:13; 2 Bar 73-74. With regard to 2 Bar Lied (2008, 239-241) has shown that the Garden of Eden and the Land blend into one in Baruch's eschatology. See also Part III: The divine dominion and Utopia.

<sup>141</sup> The abundance of fertility is a common biblical motif cf. Lev 26:2-5; Job 26:6; Joel 2:19; 4 Ezek 2:19.

<sup>142</sup> For the removal of the sword as a metaphor for the cessation of war cf. Ezek 39:9; Mic 4:3; 1 Macc 9:73; 4Q246 II, 6.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Lev 26:4f; Deut 11:14f; Isa 51:3; Ezek 36:29-30; Amos 9:13-15.

<sup>144</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 285. Cf. Homer, Od. 2.340-41; 9.345-359.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Hesiod, Op. 117-123. See also Part III: The divine dominion and Utopia.

whose acts are also described as coming from heaven in the works of Homer.<sup>146</sup> In line 807, God is explicitly designated as dwelling in heaven (θεὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν).<sup>147</sup>

There will be an abundance of milk. The image evokes that of the land flowing with milk and honey.<sup>148</sup> Milk and honey were also part of the utopian imagery in line 622.

In line 642 the Sibyl spoke of the evil and immoral nature of the cities. However, after God's judgement, they too will be full of good things. In that age, war will finally cease. The rich fields form a contrast with the several descriptions of drought throughout the book.

Lines 751-757a describe the cessation of war. Lines 751 and 755-757a frame the passage with predictions of peace while lines 752-754 speak of the absence of drought and famine. With the absence of war there will be no drought and famine and the earth will no longer be shaken. The relation of war and famine is self-evident, however, there is no immediate connection to the shaking of the earth or drought. The Sibyl sets the motif of war in a cosmological setting as drought and earthquakes were commonly believed to be enacted by the gods.<sup>149</sup> While fertility is a symbol of God's blessing and benevolence<sup>150</sup>, drought and famine signify the removal of his blessing. The motif that fertility and peace will be available for all mankind is paralleled in 1. En. 10:18-22. It is said that once all evil has been purged, all men will be righteous, praise God and will live in abundance and fertility.<sup>151</sup> The combination of peace and fertility also recalls a Garden of Eden setting. War and famine often go together in descriptions of hardships.<sup>152</sup>

In line 263 (τοῖσι μόνοις καρπὸν τελέθει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα)<sup>153</sup> the Sibyl cites Hesiod (καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ζείδωρος)<sup>154</sup> in her prediction about fertility for the golden race. In Hesiod's Opera abundant fertility was provided for the golden race, the ideal noble race of men of the past.<sup>155</sup> While in line 263 the fertility of the earth is limited to the people of God, it will eventually become available to all mankind as the book progresses.<sup>156</sup> It is part of the

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 1.208; 8.19-21, 365; 23.189; Od. 6.281; 20.31; Hesiod, Theog. 760f and comment on line 308.

<sup>147</sup> See comment there and Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Exod 3:8; 13:5; Num 13:27; 14:9.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Judg 5:4f, Hab 3:6, As. Mos. 10.4. The shaking of the earth is also related to war. In line 177 it is said that Rome would shake many, i.e. cause fear to them. The end of shaking can therefore also relate to the end of war.

<sup>150</sup> Hesiod, Op. 115-120. Cf. Ps 127-128 (126-127 LXX). Ps 128:1 also shows the relation between human behaviour and divine benevolence as fertility will only be available for those who walk in the way of God. The Sibyl shares this notion (see: "The law as the way of God" above).

<sup>151</sup> Cf. also frg. 3.48-49.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. The Oracle of the Potter P<sub>2</sub> I 8-12; Isa 51:19; Jer 11:22; 14:12-18; 18:21; 21:7-9 et al; Ezek 5:17; 6:11; Rev 6:8.

<sup>153</sup> For them alone the fertile earth yields fruit.

<sup>154</sup> Hesiod, Op. 117.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Hesiod, Op. 109-126.

<sup>156</sup> Lines 619-23, and 744-50.

theology of the book that the utopian conditions will be provided for all mankind once the people of God have fulfilled their role as virtues law-abiding examples.

With the eradication of war, another main theme of the book comes full circle. War was first brought into the world by the first Greek kings, i.e. the Titans and led to the divided kingdoms on earth battling one another for world dominion (154ff). The Sibyl predicted all kinds of evils for the respective nations, some caused by their battles and some caused by God. In the end, however, all strife on earth will cease and only the righteous and penitent will live to see a new age. The absence of war is also a common motif in biblical and classical utopias.<sup>157</sup>

Lines 755ff elaborate further on the peaceful conditions that God gives from heaven at the end of days: there will be great peace on earth and king will be friends with king.<sup>158</sup> Universal peace is one of the Sibyl's major concerns. The vicious circle of war that had begun with the Titan War will finally come to an end after the divine judgment has come to pass.<sup>159</sup> The end of war was also already mentioned in line 751 via the absence of swords. The prediction that kings will be friends with kings is contrary to what we have observed from the horizontal line so far where kingdoms fight and succeed each other. That peace will be eternal (αἰῶνος) also mirrors the prediction that God's dominion will be established perpetually in line 767. The blissful age will thus last forever.

## 8.9 The common law (757b-761)

757b ...κοινόν τε νόμον κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν  
 758 ἀνθρώποις τελέσειεν ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστερόεντι  
 759 ἀθάνατος, ὅσα πέπρακται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.  
 760 αὐτὸς γὰρ μόνος ἐστὶ θεὸς κοῦκ ἔστιν ἕτ' ἄλλος·  
 761 αὐτὸς καὶ πυρὶ φλέξειεν χαλεπῶν γένος ἀνδρῶν.

...a common law for men on the entire earth  
 the Immortal will complete in starry heaven,  
 applying to everything done by poor mortals.  
 For he is the only God and there is no other.  
 He will burn the race of the wicked men with fire.

In that peaceful age God in starry heaven (ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστερόεντι) will complete the common law (κοινὸς νόμος) for all men on the entire earth (κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν). From the denominator πᾶς it can be concluded that the law will apply to everyone and will not be

<sup>157</sup> Lev 26:6; Isa 2:1-4; 9:1-6; 11:1-10; 65:16b-25; Ezek 34:25; Zech 9:9-10; 14:1-15; Cf. Philo, Praem. 87; Hesiod, Op. 125-126; Virgil, Ecl. 4.22, 24.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. lines 367, 635; Ps 71:7 (72:7 LXX); 4Q215a frg. 1 II 5; 4Q246 II 6.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. lines 780 and 807.



limited to a select group whereas the Mosaic Law (ἄγνους νόμος) was only given to the pious (cf. lines 256-257). The common law will be established for all men left on earth. Line 757 is analogous to line 755 where peace is announced for the entire earth (ἀλλὰ μὲν εἰρήνη μεγάλη κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν)<sup>160</sup>. Both, the great peace and the common law, will be valid throughout the entire earth (κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν), they have the same sphere of action. Throughout the book it was implied that the law applies to the nations as well as to the people of God.<sup>161</sup>

The common law is not a new law. The holy law that was once given to the pious will now apply to the entire earth. It is the same law, but God will ‘complete’ or ‘finish’ (τελέω) it, so that it will apply to everyone. The principle that all people will acknowledge the law of God at the end of time can be found in biblical tradition.<sup>162</sup> In Rabbinic literature the notion that the law will be fully comprehensible can be found.<sup>163</sup> In Rom 10:4 Paul claims that Christ is the “fulfilment” (τέλος) of the law.<sup>164</sup> According to the Sibyl, God will fulfill the law for the entire earth once he has passed his judgement on the wicked.

The concept of a common<sup>165</sup> or natural law that applies to all people is a popular concept of the Greco-Roman tradition that was also adopted by Philo<sup>166</sup> and is ultimately of stoic origin.<sup>167</sup> Before the stoics talked of natural law, they spoke of κοινὸς νόμος, a common law. The phrase can be found in the majority of stoic thinkers.<sup>168</sup> In all of these cases the law is not merely the written law of the city but rather it is seen as being connected with nature of God itself.<sup>169</sup> By picking up on the concept, the Sibyl has, once again, interwoven Jewish and Greco-Roman tradition. Although the holy law was only given to the pious, it technically applies to all people. However, those who do not turn to it will be destroyed. The law will be fulfilled once all people will acknowledge the law and the wicked will be punished. The common law redefines the vertical line. Whereas the holy law particularly signified the special relation between God and his people, the common law explicitly defines that between

<sup>160</sup> See comment there.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. lines 194-195, 599-600.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Isa 11:9; Dan 14:4; Jub. 23:26-31; 1QpHab X, 14-XI 2; 1Q27 frg. 1 I, 5-12; Wis 13; Rom 1.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. b. San. 97 a/b; b. Sabb. 151b.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Rom 10:4 (τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστός). The (false) notion that the Torah will be abolished in the messianic age derives from assumptions based on Rom 10:4 (Christ is the end of the law). Scholars in the past have often assumed that Paul derived this notion, one way or another, from rabbinic sources. It has been a debate among scholars how to translate Rom 10:4 and τέλος in particular as the term has a degree of ambiguity as LSJ and BDG demonstrate. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to go into that discussion. See also: Schäfer, 1978.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Martens, 2003, 18-30.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Philo, Abr. 275ff.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Ps.-Phoc. 30; Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 81. See also Pohlenz, 1992.

<sup>168</sup> Martens, 2003, 18. Cf. Zeno apud Plutarch, Alex. 329a-b (SVF 1.262); Chrysippus apud Diogenes Laertius 7.87-89; Pindar, fig. 69, Cleanthes, Hymn to Zeus (SVF 1.537).

<sup>169</sup> Martens, 2003, 19.

him and all people. While the holy law is inclusive inasmuch it applies to all people but was not given to all people, the common law is universal because it is completed for all people.

Philo discusses the role of the law in *Virt.* 199f and *Mos.* 2.44. According to *Virt.* 199 the law is universal and all mankind is able to partake in the highest happiness. In the future, the nations will enter into relations with the law. In *Mos.* 2.44 Philo tells the tale of the origin of the Septuagint. According to Philo the High Priest and the king of Judah thought it was a pity that only half of humankind but not the Greek speaking ones could have a part in the laws.<sup>170</sup> This implies that the law is intended for all of mankind.<sup>171</sup> In *Mos.* 2.44 Philo comes to the conclusion that eventually all nations would abandon their customs and follow the Jewish law alone. In the mind of Philo, the people of Israel are an example for the rest of mankind to follow the law.

According to *Sirach* 17 the 'law of life' (νόμος ζωῆς)<sup>172</sup> was given to all mankind as an inheritance. *Sirach* 17 is a poem that deals with God as the creator and how men were created in his image (1-16) and, in the second half, deals with the special relationship between God and Israel (17-24). In the final section (25-32) an admonition to return to God follows.<sup>173</sup> In *Sir* 17:1a it is said that God created men from the earth (Κύριος ἔκτισεν ἐκ γῆς ἄνθρωπον). Verses 1b-16 detail the features (such as limited lifespan, fear strength, wisdom and knowledge) with which God endowed men. The law of life in verse 11 is one of those features and apparently it was given to all mankind in common. Only in verse 17 the focus switches to Israel.

A similar concept of a universal law is echoed in *Wis* 18:4<sup>174</sup> and *Rom* 2:14<sup>175</sup>. According to *Wis* the law was given to Israel to be a light for the nations and eventually the nations will accept the law as their own. According to Paul, the Gentiles naturally act according to the law (φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν) although they do not possess it. Accordingly, God will judge every person, Jews and nations alike according to their actions.<sup>176</sup> On the other hand, the pure possession of the law does not save Israel if they do not practice the law.<sup>177</sup> Paul breaks up the connection of Israel and the law.<sup>178</sup> The law that the nations practice by nature equals the

---

<sup>170</sup> Philo, *Mos.* 2.31.

<sup>171</sup> Holtz, 2007, 164.

<sup>172</sup> *Sir* 17:11. The 'law of life' is not a term that occurs anywhere else in the LXX but the idea is drawn from *Deut* 4 and 30:11-20 where the keeping of the law guarantees a long life in the land. Cf. also *Bar* 4:1-4.

<sup>173</sup> For a detailed outline and analysis refer to Skehan, 1987, 280ff.

<sup>174</sup> ...νόμου φῶς τῷ αἰῶνι δίδοσθαι.

<sup>175</sup> ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος.

<sup>176</sup> *Rom* 2:1-11.

<sup>177</sup> *Rom* 2:12. Cf. 1 *En.* 91:12-17; 93:3-10. Cf. Hoffmann, 1999.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Holtz, 2007, 281.

regulations of the law (τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου)<sup>179</sup>. In light of Rom 1:22-32 these regulations are an equivalent to the later Noachian laws.<sup>180</sup> In Rom 2:17-24 Paul accuses Jews who break the law and concludes that circumcision is only worthwhile as long as one keeps the law. In all of this, the connection of Israel, the law, and God is not a given.<sup>181</sup>

The Sibyl takes her part in this debate long before Paul would. In that respect the Sibyl is close to wisdom literature<sup>182</sup> which takes a position similar to that of Paul. Righteousness and law obedience reflect an inner-Jewish debate, a debate that found its way into early Christianity.

The fact that God made the law in heaven, his holy realm, evidently stresses the divine origin of the law. The notion that the law was crafted in heaven is a common one in post-biblical and rabbinic Judaism.<sup>183</sup> Up until the end, the law remains the central feature in the Sibyl's theology. With the transformation of the law into a common law, the role of the law comes full circle. Whereas it was once given only to the people of God it now applies to all (penitent) nations.

The passage concludes with a statement that God is the one god (μόνος ἐστὶ θεός) and that there is no other (see comment on line 718). The same statement is found in line 629 (see comment there). In the LXX there are several instances for μόνος in combination with θεός and/or κύριος.<sup>184</sup> It is most prominently used to stress God's uniqueness.<sup>185</sup> In addition, μόνος designates JHWH as the sole God of all kingdoms<sup>186</sup>, and as the sole creator<sup>187</sup>. This usage of the term is parallel to the usage of the term in Greek religion where it designates a god's sole power in his respective area.<sup>188</sup> However, God's power is not limited; he is the only God and there is no other (760) hence he is all powerful (cf. μόναρχος in line 704).<sup>189</sup>

The statement about God's sovereignty is followed by a remark that God will burn the race of the wicked men (χαλεπῶν γένος ἀνδρῶν)<sup>190</sup>. The χαλεποί form a contrast to the πιστοί in line 724; the χαλεποί are those who do not repent and recognise God's power and will therefore be judged with fire. With God's final judgement, the world will be physically

---

<sup>179</sup> Rom 2:26.

<sup>180</sup> Holtz, 2007, 281.

<sup>181</sup> See also Part III: the common law.

<sup>182</sup> See Part III: The divine dominion and Utopia in related literature.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Rab. 8; Zebah. 116a; Ta'an. 9a. Cf. Gal 3:19 (the law was ordained through messengers at the hand of a mediator).

<sup>184</sup> μόνος translates the Hebrew לֶבַד or בָּדֵד.

<sup>185</sup> Exod 22:19; Deut 6:13; 10:20; 32:12; Judg 10:16 B; 1 Kgs 7:3f; 3 Kgdms 18:37; 4 Kgdms 19:15-19,

<sup>186</sup> Isa 37:16, 20; 4 Kgdms 19:15; Dan 3:45.

<sup>187</sup> 2 Esd 19:6; 4 Kgdms 19:15; Job 9:8; Wis 10:1; Isa 37:16; 44:24.

<sup>188</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 544.

<sup>189</sup> See also Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. lines 669-701.

transformed. While until now it has been a hostile place, it will then be full of abundant prosperity and void of obstacles. These good things will no longer be limited to those who live around the temple but will be available for righteous Gentiles as well. This world will be available to the cult- and law-abiding righteous people. All truth ultimately relies on the acceptance of God as the sole ruler and the observation of the law. With it comes the forsaking of idolatry and the acceptance of the temple cult. However, the crucial aspect of repentance and conversion is the observation of the law. Idolatry is the counterpoint to law obedience. The Third Sibyl draws strict boundaries between worship and recognition of the one true God, on the one hand, and idolatry, evil and immoral behaviour, on the other.<sup>191</sup>

#### 8.10 Fourth admonition (762-766)

762 ἀλλὰ κατασπεύσαντες ἕως φρένας ἐν στήθεσσι,  
 763 φεύγετε λατρείας ἀνόμους, τῷ ζῶντι λάτρετε·  
 764 μοιχείας πεφύλαξο καὶ ἄρσενος ἄκριτον εὐνήν·  
 765 τὴν δ' ἰδίαν γένναν παίδων τρέφε μηδὲ φόνευσέ  
 766 ταῦτα γὰρ ἀθάνατος κεχολώσεται ὅς κεν ἀμάρτη.

But urge the thoughts in your breast,  
 evade unlawful worship, worship the living one.  
 Beware of adultery and homosexual intercourse with men.  
 Raise your own offspring and do not kill it,  
 for the Immortal is angry at anyone who commits these things.

The prediction about God's future intervention is discontinued by another admonition. Again, the Sibyl switches to the second person addressing the reader alternating between the singular and the plural. The Sibyl admonishes the reader to worship God alone and not to kill one's own offspring. This is probably an allusion to the Greek practice of killing unwanted newborns or foetuses which is often condemned in Jewish writings.<sup>192</sup> It also echoes the story of Medea, who according to Euripides killed her own children.<sup>193</sup> It is fitting that the Sibyl mentions this right after the passage about the common law. Nowhere in the third book can any reference to dietary laws or circumcision be found, which would be the usual basic requirements for a life according to the law. It seems as though the Sibyl is reducing the law to ethical principles.<sup>194</sup>

These admonitions structure the text. The first one occurred in lines 545-572, the second in 624-651, the third in 732-740, and the fourth and last here in lines 762-766. Three out of four

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Chester, 1991, 46.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Philo, Spec. 3.110-119; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.202.

<sup>193</sup> Euripides, Med. 1271ff.

<sup>194</sup> see also Part III: The Sibyl and the law: The common law.

are directly addressed at Greece, only the fourth lacks a direct addressee. Whereas in the other three Greece was the fictional addressee of the book, the Sibyl departs from this structure at the end. One can conclude that the author wanted to make clear that the Sibyl's prophecies concern all people now that the book draws to its conclusion. The admonitions structure the sequence of weal and woe. They are to signify that not only the people of God will be saved but that all people can be provided they turn to God and his law. This is why they discontinue the predictions about judgement on the one hand and the Golden Age on the other. Furthermore, it is part of the image of a prophet to admonish the people to avert divine retribution.

## 9 Section VIII: Lines 767-808

### *The manifestation of the divine dominion on earth*

#### 9.1 Introduction

The phrase καὶ τότε δὴ + future tense (767) makes it clear that the events described in the following lines are expected in the future<sup>1</sup> and also separates lines 767ff from the previous section which ended with an admonition (lines 762-766). According to line 767, God will establish his *basilêion* among all people. The establishment of the *basilêion* will happen after punishing the wicked in lines 761-762. The formula (καὶ τότε δὴ + future tense) is a structuring element of the Sibyllist<sup>2</sup> and line 767 is the final occurrence of it in the Third Book. This fits the traditional notion that the establishment of the divine dominion on earth is the final divine intervention into history; the horizontal line as we know it.

The topos of the establishment of divine dominion or a heavenly kingdom on earth is known from biblical literature and beyond.<sup>3</sup> In some cases the image develops into a future dominion of the Judeans over all peoples<sup>4</sup>, in others into the expectation of a future (davidic) king who will restore the land to its former prosperity and hold the nations sway.<sup>5</sup> After the destruction of the first Temple, the concept that God will establish his kingship in Israel with Jerusalem (i.e. the temple) as his throne began to emerge.<sup>6</sup> This concept is usually tied to the land or the people of Israel.<sup>7</sup> The future kingdom of God will be established in the territory of Israel – sometimes this is connected to the idea of a Davidic king (or Messiah) that will reestablish local kingship.<sup>8</sup> It is the concept on which the Jesus and early Christianity pick up to establish its own idea of the kingdom of God around Jesus.<sup>9</sup> In the Sibyl the people of God are not assigned a horizontal political role. Throughout the book their role is described in vertical terms. In line 781, the Sibyl speaks of prophets who will be judges and kings which, if the prophets are to be identified with the pious people of God, mirrors the prediction that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.286 (from heaven he will send a king), 294 (the temple will be as it was before), 400 (then a side-growing horn will rule), 615 (the Asian king will ride on the broad back of the sea), 619 (God will give great joy), 710 (all islands and cities will say).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 2.34, 196-197, 252-253; 4.62-63; 128; 183; 5.301; 11.210; 12.47, 159-161, 202, 217-219, 277; 13.85-86; 105-108, 142-143; 14.39, 48, 91, 147-148, 158-159, 161, 168, 312, 337-338.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ps 9:8; 10:16; 29:10; 145:13; 146:10; Dan 3:33 (Theod. 4:3); 4:34 et al.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Isa 14:1-2; 60:10-11; 61:6; Dan 7:18, 27; Jub. 22:11; 23:22-32; 31:18; 1QpHab V, 3-5; As. Mos. 10.1-10.

<sup>5</sup> MT Jer 33:14-17; 4Q246 I, 9-II 9; 4Q252 V, 1-5; 2 Esd 7:28; 12:31-34; 13:32-50; Pss. Sol. 17:21-46; Luke 1:32-33.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Isa 6:1; Jer 3:17; 17:2; Dan 7:9.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 4QSM 1,1-12 // 11Q14 1 ii,1-5.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Mic 4:7,8; Ps 102:19; 144:11-3; Wis 6:4, 10; Dan 3:54; 4:3.

<sup>9</sup> On the subject see for instance the recent publications by Beavis, 2006; Merklein, 1989; Neusner, 2007; Stewart, 2009; Ziccardi, 2008.

they would be moral guides for all mortals made in line 196 rather than political primacy. The superiority of those superior in virtue was a common concept in antiquity.<sup>10</sup> It cannot be discerned from the text that the role of the people of God in the *basilêion* will be a political one in the sense that they will dominate the other nations. In fact, no one will be left to dominate as only the pious (i.e. the people of God and the penitent Gentiles) will live to see the *basilêion*. By default the people of God are morally superior to all other nations because they have the law.

Lines 767-807 describe how God will manifest his dominion on earth and dwell in it. The vertical line is completed here. Whereas through the course of the book God dwelled in heaven and directed the unfolding events from there, he now manifests his dominion among the people on earth and dwells in the 'maiden'. The notion that God rules the world from heaven is a widespread concept in Jewish tradition and repeatedly occurs in the Third Sibyl.<sup>11</sup> God can now establish his *basilêion* because the people have fulfilled their role as moral guides for all mortals. The nations that have not been destroyed by God have turned to him and accepted the law as the most righteous of all laws. God therefore transformed the law into a common law (see comments on lines 757ff).

## 9.2 Structure

767-771 God will establish his divine dominion...

767-768a ...for all people

768b-769a ... he who once gave the law to the pious

769b-771 ...to whom he promised...

772-776 The nations will make pilgrimage to the house of God

777-779 Transformation of the earth

780-784 Universal peace

785-787 The maiden

788-795 Peace of the animals

796-807 Signs of the end

The entire section is framed by the statements in line 767 and 807. In line 767 it is said that God will establish his divine dominion on earth for all people while line 807 concludes that this is ultimate the end of war which God dwelling in heaven will bring about. The establishment of the divine dominion on earth and the consummation of war conclude the two

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Philo, Praem. 93-96 ; Holtz, 2007, 153.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Ps 9:8; 10:16; 29:10; 145:13; Dan 3:33 (Theod. 4:3); 4:34; Tob 13:13. See also Part III: The Image of God.

main themes of the Third Sibyl at once. The section is the conclusion and the fusion of the vertical (divine dominion) and horizontal lines (end of war).

The sections detail eschatological expectations known from the Hebrew Bible as well as from Greco-Roman ideas about the Golden Age and other utopias.<sup>12</sup> In the end, the world will be transformed into a Utopia.

### 9.3 The *basilêion* (767-769)

767 καὶ τότε δὴ ἐξεγερεῖ βασιλήιον εἰς αἰῶνας  
 768 πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους,  
     ἅγιον νόμον ὅς ποτ' ἔδωκεν  
 769 εὐσεβέσιν,  
     τοῖς πᾶσιν ὑπέσχετο γαῖαν ἀνοίξειν  
 770 καὶ κόσμον μακάρων τε πύλας καὶ χάρματα πάντα  
 771 καὶ νοῦν ἀθάνατον αἰώνιον εὐφροσύνην τε.

And then, indeed, he will manifest perpetual dominion  
 among all men, he who once gave the holy law  
 to the pious, whom he promised to unlock the earth  
 and the world and the gates of the blessed and all joys,  
 immortal sense and eternal gladness.

Lines 767-769a shall be discussed first. A complex clause begins in line 767 that runs through to line 771. A relative clause starts in line 768a that is followed by another relative clause that starts in line 769b and continues until the end of the full clause in line 771. I will first look into the main clause (lines 767-768a) as well as the relative clause (768b-769a).

The Sibyl predicts that God will erect an eternal *basilêion* (βασιλήιον) among all people (πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους). The *basilêion* will not be limited to a specific ethnic group but rather to those who will survive God's judgment.<sup>13</sup> The wording is similar to line 757f where it is said that God will perfect a common law for all people (κοινόν τε νόμον κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν ἀνθρώποις).<sup>14</sup> In both instances it is clear from the denominator πᾶς that the events described will be universal and not limited to a specific nation or territory. Line 757 is even clearer in this respect as it features not all people but the entire earth (κατὰ γαῖαν ἅπασαν). This is a decisive difference to some Jewish and Christian texts from the period, especially the Palestinian ones in which a blissful eschaton is often reserved for the people of Israel.<sup>15</sup> The Sibyl's universalistic approach is most probably owed to the facts that the Third Sibyl originated in the Diaspora and that it pretends to be gentile. By their very nature, the Sibyl's

<sup>12</sup> See Introduction: 4. Utopia.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. lines 744-756, 762-766.

<sup>14</sup> See comments there.

<sup>15</sup> Dan 7:18; Pss. Sol. 14; 17:36ff; 21; cf. Matt 19:28 // Luke 22:30; Rom 9-11.



prophecies are not limited to a specific nation like those of the biblical prophets and sages are. At the same time it is implied that the people of God can also fall from grace with God if they forsake him and his law. This is paralleled in other Jewish writings from the Hellenistic period.<sup>16</sup>

It is common to think of the proverbial kingdom of God with regard to such description of the final age. However, the term βασιλῆιον can mean both kingdom and dominion. Will God establish a kingdom or his dominion? In order to identify the meaning and nature of the Sibyl's *basilēion* a look into the dictionaries is required.

#### 9.4 The lexicographical description of βασιλῆιον/ βασιλεία

The spelling βασιλῆιον in Jewish texts does not seem to occur outside the Sibylline corpus and the evidence for βασιλειον outside the Sibyllines is scarce.<sup>17</sup> LSJ lists βασιλῆιον as an ionic form of βασιλειον (kingly dwelling place, palace). According to LSJ βασιλειον (ionic: βασιλῆιον) has the meanings 1a) Kingly dwelling place, palace, b) seat of empire, capital, 2) royal treasure. None of these seem to fit the meaning in the Third Sibyl.<sup>18</sup> In the LXX βασιλειον<sup>19</sup> (according to Muraoka) only occurs in the meaning of royal residence or palace (Nah 2:7; 2 Kgdms 11:2).<sup>20</sup>

According to Panayiotou, βασιλειον in line 159 (which has only one occurrence) and βασιλῆιον in line 767 are different spellings of one and the same term, the latter being the ionic-epic form.<sup>21</sup> The Sibyl uses the spelling βασιλῆιον more frequently.<sup>22</sup> The term βασιλειον or βασιλῆιον occurs five times in the Third Sibyl of which in only two instances the noun is used, namely here in line 767 and in line 614 in reference to Egypt. According to Panayiotou βασιλειον and βασιλῆιον therefore both mean kingdom.<sup>23</sup> In line 159 βασιλειον can take both meanings.<sup>24</sup>

Βασιλης is another term the Sibyl frequently uses when she speaks of kingdoms. The Sibyl uses the noun βασιλης four times.<sup>25</sup> The term βασιλης is likewise unusual and LSJ lists it as either the feminine form of the adjective βασιλειος (royal) or as a derivate of βασιλεία (queen).<sup>26</sup> Both terms are favoured Sibyllistic style<sup>27</sup> and are analogous to the classical term βασιλεία which usurps the meaning of (I) kingdom or (II) dominion<sup>28</sup> in the geographical sense.<sup>29</sup> According to the dictionaries, βασιλῆιον and βασιλης both mean kingdom and/or dominion. The terms are identical to the more common βασιλεία.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. lines 220-228 and comments there. Philo shares the notion that a Jew can be excluded from the Jewish community by forsaking God and turning to foreign gods (Spec. 1.324-5; 2.255f). Cf. Holtz, 2007, 490-7.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.288, 463, 483 (all adjective), 614 (of Egypt), 767 (of God). Also in the other Sibyllines: Sib. Or. 1.292; Sib. Or. 8.6; Sib. Or. 11.56, 73, 207, 285; Sib. Or. 12.36, 93, 206; Sib. Or. 14.70, 182, 197, 203, 246. Cf. also (for βασιλειον!) T. Jud. 22.3 (noun); T. Sol 5.5 (noun); 4 Macc 3.8 (adj.); Artap. 3.24 (adj.).

<sup>18</sup> LSJ, "βασιλειον," 309.

<sup>19</sup> Βασιλῆιον is not listed.

<sup>20</sup> Muraoka, 2009, "βασιλεία," 114.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Panayiotou, 1987, 62f.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.159, 288, 463, 483, 614, 767. Cf. also Sib. Or. 1.292; 8.6; 11.56, 73, 207, 285; 12-36, 93, 206; 14.70, 182, 197, 203, 246.

<sup>23</sup> Panayiotou, 1987, 62.

<sup>24</sup> The kingdom or the dominion of Egypt are both correct since Egypt is the territorial area of Egypt as well as the dominion extending beyond it in certain periods.

<sup>25</sup> Sib. Or. 3.120 (adj.), 166, 175, 192. The other Sibylline books pick up on the terminology cf. Sib. Or. 1.389; Sib. Or. 8.201, 322; 11.19, 101; 12.141, 233, 259, 29; 13.6, 63; 14.73, 77, 96 mostly as adjective to ἀρχή (rule/dominion).

<sup>26</sup> LSJ, "βασιλης," 309.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Also T. Jud. 22.3; T. Sol. 5.5; 4 Macc 3.8; Artap. 3.24 for βασιλῆιον.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Panayiotou, 1987, 63.

<sup>29</sup> P. Lampe, "βασιλεία," EWNT 1:483.

With regard to the Sibyl, the terms βασιλῆιον and βασιλῆις are rendered as kingdom rather than dominion by most interpreters.<sup>30</sup> However, there is an essential difference between the two. If one understands kingdom as a territorial space that is within fixed borders or a country ruled by a king or queen<sup>31</sup> and dominion as authority to rule<sup>32</sup> (rather than an area controlled by one ruler) it needs to be discussed whether either of these can be used to render the Sibyl's βασιλῆιον. Whereas 'kingdom' defines geographical space, an area or district ruled by a king<sup>33</sup>, 'dominion' defines a concept, namely that of rule or 'reign of a king, with the implication of complete authority'.<sup>34</sup> In other words, kingdom defines ruled space whereas dominion defines rule that is realised in space.

Louw/Nida (L&N) remarks considering the term βασιλεία: 'Since in many areas of the world kingship is not known (i.e. the succession of rulers within a family and by inheritance), it may not be possible to find a technical term meaning 'kingdom'. Usually, however, one may employ an expression which is roughly equivalent in meaning to 'domain,' so that, for example, the last part of Mark 6:23 (ἕως ἡμίσεως τῆς βασιλείας μου) may be rendered as "up to a half of the region which I rule".<sup>35</sup> And: 'It is generally a serious mistake to translate the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ 'the kingdom of God' as referring to a particular area in which God rules. The meaning of this phrase in the NT involves not a particular place or special period of time but the fact of ruling. An expression such as 'to enter the kingdom of God' thus does not refer to 'going to heaven' but should be understood as 'accepting God's rule' or 'welcoming God to rule over'.<sup>36</sup>

According to Danker (BAGD), βασιλεία is a term relating to royal administration that defines either 1) the act of ruling (kingship, royal power, rule) or 2) a territory ruled by a king (kingdom).<sup>37</sup> Muraoka comes to the same conclusion: βασιλεία is either: 1) dominion, reigning, supreme authority or 2) territory ruled by a βασιλεύς (kingdom, empire).<sup>38</sup>

The question of the meaning of βασιλεία is not so easily answered either by the LXX or the NT evidence since in most instances both meanings are possible. The same can be observed with regard to classical Greek literature. In Diodor's account of the Titanomachy, for instance, Zeus takes over the βασιλεία from Cronus.<sup>39</sup> The examples show that the term can mean both, dominion and kingdom. However, this is not an either/or decision, instead it can be argued that unless it is absolutely clear (for instance by a territorial denominator) βασιλεία always invokes both meanings. Its precise meaning in the Third Sibyl remains to be seen.

## 9.5 The *basilêion* in the Sibyl

The problem remains that βασιλῆιον / βασίλειον / βασιλεία can mean kingdom as well as dominion and that it is not easy to determine which one the Sibyl had in mind. Throughout the book both kingship and dominion are recurring topics: human kingdoms are contrasted with the perpetual and uncontested dominion of God. In most of the instances where the

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Kurfes, 1951, 109; Collins, 1984a, 379; Gauger, 1998, 109; Buitenwerf, 2003, 288f; Merkel, 2003, 1106.

<sup>31</sup> "Kingdom." OALD. Oxford: University Press, n.d. No pages. Cited 27 October 2010. Online: <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/kingdom>.

<sup>32</sup> "Dominion." OALD. Oxford: University Press, n.d. No pages. Cited 27 October 2010. Online: <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/dominion>.

<sup>33</sup> L&N "βασιλεία," 1.82, 16.

<sup>34</sup> L&N "βασιλεία," 37.64, 479.

<sup>35</sup> L&N "βασιλεία," 1.82, 16.

<sup>36</sup> L&N "βασιλεία," 37.64, 480.

<sup>37</sup> Danker, "βασιλεία," BAGD 168-169.

<sup>38</sup> Muraoka, 2009, "βασιλεία," 114.

<sup>39</sup> Diodorus, 5.17.1. In Sib. Or. 3.110 it is said that Cronus, Titan, and Iapetos reigned (βασιλευσε) equally.

βασιλ-root occurs it seems that the double meaning is intended (as it is inherent in the Greek language). This demands a closer look at the lines in question.

We will see that the *basilêion* of God in the Third Sibyl is not a place, but it is something that is realised in space. We have already observed that in the Third Sibyl God and his dominion are not tied to the land of Israel nor to any other land. Accordingly, the *basilêion* is not restricted to a specific area. The *basilêion* is also not heaven. The *basilêion* is one for *all* people. The *basilêion* will cover the whole world wherefore it does not have any boundaries. This is one of the many differences to the human kingdoms. The establishment of God's *basilêion* in the Third Sibyl has no territorial boundaries, it will be established among all people.<sup>40</sup> This is an important observation speaking against the translation of *basilêion* as 'kingdom'. The English word 'dominion' is therefore more suitable because the *basilêion* is not demarcated territorially. However, dominion is likewise not a sufficient translation as it does not cover the physical realisation of God's dominion. This can be circumscribed by speaking of the manifestation of God's dominion on earth.

Up until the manifestation of God's dominion on earth different human kingdoms reigned and claimed world dominion until they were thwarted by God. But now he takes over world dominion himself. Until then God reigned in heaven.<sup>41</sup> Ever since the Titan War men had aspired to rule the world because they would not be satisfied with their share: first the Titans, then the Greeks, then the Romans. The only true dominion, however, is that of God. Therefore the divine dominion will extent over the whole world and transform it physically. The *basilêion* will succeed the human kingdoms and surpass them in any respect.

## 9.6 The *basilêion* and the human kingdoms

In order to determine the nature of the *basilêion* a closer look at the phraseology of line 767 is necessary.

776 καὶ τότε δὴ ἐξεγερεῖ βασιλήιον εἰς αἰῶνας  
And then he will manifest perpetual dominion

158b-159a αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα [...] Αἰγύπτου βασίλειον ἐγείρατο  
And the kingdom of Egypt arose...

Line 767 (ἐξεγερεῖ βασιλήιον) is similar to line 159 (βασίλειον ἐγείρατο). Both lines deal with the establishment of rule. While in line 767ff the establishment of divine dominion is

<sup>40</sup> Gauger, 1998, 109 leaves out line 768 so that the divine dominion will only be established for the pious. However, I see no reason to cross out line 786 and Gauger fails to mention any.

<sup>41</sup> This is evident from line 807 (θεὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν) and from the manifold references to God causing things from heaven. See also: Image of God.

laid out, lines 158b-161 detail the succession of rule after the Titan kingdoms up until the rise of Rome. The similarity in wording of line 767 and 159 sheds light on the relation of the *basilêion* to the human kingdoms. It is said in 767 that God will raise up (ἐξεγείρω) an eternal βασιλῆιον. In lines 159ff it is outlined which human kingdom – for instance Egypt, Macedonia, and Rome - would arise and in what order (see comments there). The terminology is very similar to line 767 yet it is not identical.<sup>42</sup> Ἐγείρω takes the meaning of waking up or standing up or cause to stand up. Ἐξεγείρω in contrast to ἐγείρω can mean to raise, to awaken (in the NT from the dead)<sup>43</sup>, to bring into existence or to bring into power<sup>44</sup>. Both verbs can take a causative meaning, however, only in line 767 the causative meaning is intended; God will cause the βασιλῆιον to rise up whereas the kingdoms of lines 158b-161 stood up by themselves only to be put to an end by God. Other than in Daniel, for instance, God does not set up the kingdoms in the first place.<sup>45</sup> In the book of Daniel kingdoms are transitory and established by God. In the Sibyl, kingdoms rise on their own. At the same time, they are put to an end by God. At the end of days God will bring about the change and end the spiral of violence that was started by the Titan War.

The *basilêion* connects the end of the book with the beginning and rounds off the horizontal succession of earthly kingdoms and war. The eternal divine *basilêion* sharply contrasts the temporary kingdoms of the hubristic human kings. This hubris originated with the Titans (lines 108-158a) and first culminated in the erection of the tower of Babel (lines 97-107). Men explicitly assaulted God in his realm because they believed they could be the rulers of heaven and earth. After men were dispersed, the kingdoms of the Greco-Macedonians and the Romans arose and repeatedly brought war and injustice among the people (158b-193). It was therefore the task of the people of God to guide mankind to a better way of living (194-195).

It can be concluded that God will set up his eternal *basilêion* (on earth) in contrast to the temporary kingdoms of men which he put to an end. In that sense, the *basilêion* is the manifestation of God's dominion on earth once the kingdoms of the hubristic human kings have been abolished by God. It is here that the horizontal and the vertical lines are joined and completed. Human kingship is diminished through divine intervention and heavenly kingship will be established on the entire earth instead. The people of God fulfill their role as moral guides for all mortals. Those who follow their example take part in God's *basilêion*.

---

<sup>42</sup> Cf. comment on line 159.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6:14.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Rom 9:17.

<sup>45</sup> See also Part III: the divine dominion in related literature.

### 9.7 The perpetual *basilêion*

The Sibyl describes God's dominion as perpetual (εἰς αἰῶνας). It is one of many features that the Sibyl's *basilêion* has in common with Daniel's final kingdom but also with Psalm 145.<sup>46</sup> Common to the Sibyl and Daniel is that the final kingdom will be set up by God and that it will last forever (εἰς αἰῶνας / εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).<sup>47</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the kingdoms of men which were all of a limited time span to be destroyed by God. God's dominion on earth will be eternal because traditionally his kingship is eternal.<sup>48</sup>

### 9.8 The universal *basilêion*

The *basilêion* will be manifested among all people (πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους). Hence this kingdom will be on earth and not in the divine heavenly sphere.<sup>49</sup> By setting up a kingdom on earth, the divine sphere and the sphere of men blend into one. At long last, the vertical line comes to its fulfillment now that God establishes his dominion on earth and the people can take part in it. The fulfillment of the vertical line began in lines 710ff with the conversion of the islands and cities. The Sibyl's universal concern could not be more obvious.

The fact that the *basilêion* will be established for all men is contrasted by the relative clause in line 768f speaking of God as the one who once (ποτέ) gave the holy law to the pious ones. The subordinate clause starting in line 768b refers to the pious (εὐσεβεῖς) to whom the holy law was given in the first place.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the book, εὐσεβής refers to the same group of people. They are the ones who live around the temple and were led into captivity by the Babylonians (213ff), they adhere to the law and pay honor to the temple (573ff), and they were given the law by the Most High (256). However, God has completed the common law that is given to all people (757). Like God has completed the common law for all people to keep, he erects his *basilêion* for all people. The establishment of God's dominion among all men corresponds to the perfection of the common law for the entire earth.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Dan 2:44; 6:27; 7:24; Ps 145:13; Isa 9:6; Rev 11:15 See also excursus on Daniel below.

<sup>47</sup> Dan 2:44; 3:33 (Theod. 4:3); 6:27. Cf. Ps 145:13; 146:10; Pss. Sol. 17:3, 46. In Dan 3:33 Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge God's everlasting rule. The credo shares common wording with Ps 145:13 which has lead scholars to assume that one text is dependent on the other although it is a matter of debate if Dan is dependent on Ps 145 or vice versa R.G. Kratz, "Das Schema des Psalters. Die Botschaft vom Reich Gottes nach Psalm 145," in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Markus Witte; vol. 2, 2 vols.; BZAW 345; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 2636..

<sup>48</sup> Cf. line 717; cf. Exod 15:18; Tob 3:11; 13:2, 4; 4 Macc 18:24; Wis 3:8; Pss. Sol. 8:26; 1. En. 9:4; Sib. Or. 8.66-67; 1QSb 3:9; 4Q236 f2ii:5; 4Q521 f2ii+4-7.

<sup>49</sup> We have observed that throughout the book God is seen as dwelling in heaven. The building of the tower at Babel was men's failed attempt to cross the fixed demarcation between the human and the divine and enter into the divine sphere (see comment there). For further reading see Part III: The Image of God.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. lines 256-257. See also 8. The role of the pious below.

### 9.9 The gates of the blessed (769-771)

Lines 769-771 form the second half of the complex clause starting in line 767.<sup>51</sup> Lines 769b-771 form one relative clause to the relative clause in lines 768b-769a. Accordingly, the dative in line 769b (τοῖς πᾶσιν) refers to the pious mentioned in line 769a.

While lines 767-769a state for whom the *basilêion* will be established, lines 769b-779 outline the features of the divine dominion and its coming. God once promised to all pious (εὐσεβέσιν, τοῖς πᾶσιν) to open up the earth, the world, and the gates of the blessed. The earth, the world and the gates of the blessed in lines 769f refer to space whereas the good things, immortal sense and eternal gladness/festivity refer to mindsets (770-771). The things that were promised to the pious complement each other: earth, world and gates of the blessed are paralleled by good things, immortal sense and eternal gladness.<sup>52</sup>

The triad earth (γῆ)<sup>53</sup>, world (κόσμος)<sup>54</sup> and gates of the blessed entails the traditional tripartite division of the earth into underworld<sup>55</sup>, inhabited or human world and heaven (if earth is understood as a reference to the underworld and gates of the blessed as heaven).<sup>56</sup> The opening of these spheres points to an accessibility of the entire world. This matches the description of the transformation of nature in lines 777-779 (see below), where it is said that there will be no more dangers or obstacles (see below).

### 9.10 Biblical analogies

By way of analogy, the motif of opening the earth and the world is unparalleled in biblical and classical Greek literature. The closest possible analogy may be found in Ezekiel 37 where God promises to open up the tombs and resurrect the dead. It is possible that the Sibyl is alluding to this well known prophecy. The Sibyl draws from other prophecies in Ezekiel,

<sup>51</sup> See outline in 3. above.

<sup>52</sup> See “The role of the pious” below for comments.

<sup>53</sup> Whereas γῆ in classical literature commonly designates the physical earth in contrast to heaven or sea, κόσμος is used in the sense of universe or as earth as opposed to heaven, i.e. the human world. In later Greek it becomes identical to οἰκουμένη, the known or inhabited world (LSJ, “κόσμος,” 985). The Sibyl uses κόσμος only two times in the sense of world.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Line 701.

<sup>55</sup> The underworld is mentioned in lines 680-681 where it is said that God will tear up the mountains so that Erebus (ἔρεβος) will be visible to all. Erebus is a place of nether darkness, forming a passage from Earth to Hades (LSJ, “ἔρεβος,” 684). Cf. Homer, Il. 16.327; Od. 10.528, Hesiod, Theog. 515. It is therefore evident that the Sibyl had a certain concept of underworld. There are also several references to Hades in the section that is usually attributed to a pagan Sibyl (393, 458, 480). Tartarus (where the Titans were banished after Zeus had defeated them [Hesiod, Theog. 729f]) and Erebus can be used as synonyms for Hades.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. The description of the shield of Achilles in Homer, Il. 18.481-89. The shield is forged for Achilles and depicts the cosmologic principle. For the creation of the world and the underworld cf. Hesiod, Theog. 116-138. The world is divided by lot and dominion is assigned to Zeus (heaven), Poseidon (earth and sea), and Hades (underworld), Homer, Il. 15, 187-193. For biblical depictions of the earth cf. Janowski, 2007.

namely the destruction of weapons of war in Ezek 39:9 (see comment on lines 728ff and 781).<sup>57</sup>

If we look for biblical analogies for the opening of the gates of the blessed we find references to the gates of an ideal (future) Jerusalem, for instance in Isaiah.<sup>58</sup> In Isa 26, a song of praise is sung by the people concerning the restored city of Jerusalem. In verse 2 the city gates are opened for the people that have kept justice and faith.<sup>59</sup> The city in Isa 26 is imagined space and does not reflect the historical city of Jerusalem.<sup>60</sup> The group of righteous people that shall enter through the gates will be its inhabitants. Scholars have assumed a cultic background for the entering of the city which has been literary transformed into a motif so that the imagined ideal city is the counterpart to the city that was accused of backsliding in Isa 1:4.<sup>61</sup> City and temple have already become one in the imagined world of Isaiah.<sup>62</sup> In the exilic and post-exilic periods it is prophesied in the Hebrew Bible that all Israel would be gathered in a restored Jerusalem, to which the nations would come in pilgrimage to praise the king of heaven.<sup>63</sup> Just as in the Third Sibyl, there is no ethnic or geographical differentiation between the nations of the earth. The special position of the people of JHWH is replaced by the differentiation between the righteous and the evil-doers. God's justice is the only thing that makes a difference in the future world.<sup>64</sup> Whereas in Exod 15 the people of Israel are singled out as different from the nations of the earth, Isa 26 envisages a future where the nations can assume an analogous position via the righteousness of God.<sup>65</sup> This concept has transpired into the Sibyl as well as into wisdom literature.<sup>66</sup>

In Isa 60 the features of future Zion are sketched in light of Isa 26. In verse 11 the LXX speaks of the city gates that shall always be open for the kings of the nations to be brought in.<sup>67</sup> Rev 22:14-15, which describes the features of the heavenly city of Jerusalem, refers to the righteous that will be able to enter it through the gates while the wicked will be left behind outside.<sup>68</sup> With regard to the Sibyl, however, a reference to the city cannot be identified. Even though the Sibyl's gates of the blessed may be influenced by the aforementioned Isaianic

---

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Mic 4:3.

<sup>58</sup> Isa 26:2; 60:11; Cf. Rev 22:14.

<sup>59</sup> λαὸς φυλάσσω δίκαιοσύνην καὶ φυλάσσω ἀλήθειαν.

<sup>60</sup> The terms Second- and Thirdspace could be applied here. See Introduction: Utopia.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Beuken, 2007, 369.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Isa 12:6; 14:32; 24:23,

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Isa 43:1-13; 49:8-26; 66:10-24; Mic 2:12-13; 4:6-9; Zeph 3:15-20; Tob 13:1-18.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Beuken, 2007, 392.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Beuken, 2007, 392.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Wis; Sir 36. See Part III: the divine dominion in related literature.

<sup>67</sup> καὶ ἀνοιχθήσονται αἱ πύλαι σου διὰ παντός, ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός οὐ κλεισθήσονται, εἰσαγαγεῖν πρὸς σὲ δύνανται ἔθνων καὶ βασιλεῖς ἀγομένοιο.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. 4QpFlor 1 I 21, 2:1-9.

texts, the author of the Third Sibyl does not have the city gates of Jerusalem in mind. A look into classical Greek literature may help to shed light on the gates of the blessed.

### 9.11 Classic analogies

In classical literature the blessed ones (μακάρες) are indeed the Olympian gods.<sup>69</sup> The phrase μακάρων πύλαι is vaguely reminiscent of the Isles of the Blessed (μακάρων νῆσοι). In Hesiod's opera the Isles of the Blessed are the final resting place of demigods and heroes and in later renditions they are a paradise for all the righteous. In the Third Sibyl, the Gates of the Blessed will be opened up for the pious. The phrase πύλαι μακάρων, however, is rather uncommon.<sup>70</sup> A TLG search yielded only one result other than the Third Sibyl. The only other literary occurrence for πύλαι μακάρων that I have been able to uncover there is in an epigram by the poet Alcaeus of Messene<sup>71</sup> (third/second century BCE) addressing Zeus as follows:

Μακύνου τείχη, Ζεῦ, Ὀλύμπια• πάντα Φιλίππου  
 ἄμβρατά• χαλκείας κλεῖε πύλας μακάρων.  
 χθὼν μὲν δὴ καὶ πόντος ὑπὸ σκῆπτροισι Φιλίππου  
 δέδμηται, λοιπὰ δ' ἅ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ὁδός

‘Make higher the walls of Mount Olympus, Zeus. Philipp can scale everything’ – an impious claim! – ‘Close the bronze gate of the blessed ones. Earth and sea lie subdued beneath Philipp’s sceptre. All that remains is the road to Olympus.’<sup>72</sup>

The epigram is pointed against Philip V of Macedon who struggled unsuccessfully against the Romans in the First Macedonian War (214 – 205 BCE) and is ‘hostile in tone and bitterly sarcastic’<sup>73</sup>. Philip is represented as an ambitious monarch who wanted to extend his rule as widely as possibly. In the remainder of the epigram we find the claim that Philip ruled land and sea, a traditional Hellenistic formula, which possessed a long history both before and after Alcaeus' time, became an accepted formula in Hellenistic flattery<sup>74</sup>. We have observed the usage of the formula in the Sibyl.<sup>75</sup> From the epigram it is not entirely clear what the gates of the blessed are but it is suggested that they are the gates of Mount Olympus since Zeus is asked to extend the walls of Olympus and close the gates of the blessed. In an imitation of the

<sup>69</sup> In Homer and Hesiod the Gods are constantly referred to as μακάρες (θεοί) as opposed to mortal men: Homer, Il. 1.399, 406, 599; 4.127; 5.349, 819; 6.141; Od. 10.299 et al cf. Hesiod, Theog. 101; 881; Op. 136; Aeschylus, Supp. 1099.

<sup>70</sup> The phrase μακάρων νῆσοι (Isles of the Blessed) is a common one though. See Introduction: Utopia.

<sup>71</sup> Anth. Pal. 9.518.

<sup>72</sup> Trans. Walbank, 2002, 128.

<sup>73</sup> Walbank, 2002, 128.

<sup>74</sup> Walbank, 1942, 135-136.

<sup>75</sup> Lines 271, 322f, 323, 659, 677f.



epigram by Alpheius of Mytilene<sup>76</sup> two centuries later the gates are rendered into the gates of Mount Olympus:

Κλεῖτε, θεός, μέγαλοιο πύλας ἀκμῆτας Ὀλύμπου·  
Close, oh God, the unwearied gates of great Olympus.

Interestingly enough, both epigrams evoke Zeus to close the gates rather than open them. In both of these epigrams it is clear that the gates of the blessed are the gates to Mount Olympus, namely the gates that separate the human world from the divine.

### 9.12 The gates of heaven in the Third Sibyl

Are the gates of the blessed in the Third Sibyl the gates to heaven, the domain of God? The opening of the gates of the blessed in the Third Sibyl would then refer to the opening of heaven. However, the earth and the world will also be opened up. If this holds water the Sibyl is indeed referring to is the accessibility of all spheres, world, underworld, and heaven. Not only will nature be transformed but God will open up his domain for the faithful people so that the entire earth will be in a paradisiacal state. Here, two worlds, heaven and earth, are joined. It is another step in the joining of the vertical (earth) and horizontal (heaven) line. In order for the divine dominion to be established among the people, the heavenly world needs to be opened up. The earthly world will then be transformed into a paradisiacal utopian state.

Supposed the gates of the blessed are the gates of heaven, a few more analogies spring to mind. In the Hebrew Bible, Jacob realises that the place in which he saw the stairway to heaven is no other than the house of God (namely Bethel) and the gate of heaven.<sup>77</sup> According to Gen 28 Bethel is the gate of heaven on earth. John 1:51 picks up on Gen 28:17. According to John the son of man is the gate of heaven.<sup>78</sup> In Rev 19:11 heaven is opened for the rider of the white horse (Jesus) to come out of it. In Rev 4:1 heaven is a temple<sup>79</sup> into which a door is opened. Rev 4 is based on Ezek 1. In the Hebrew Bible the opening of the heavens only occurs in Ezek 1:1<sup>80</sup> and influenced a variety of later visionary and apocalyptic texts.<sup>81</sup> In the context of Ezek 1, the opening of the heavens prepares the theophany in verses 2-28.

In light of these references it can be assumed that the gates of the Blessed refer to the gates of heaven and that their opening is the ultimate accessibility of all spheres. The demarcation

<sup>76</sup> Anth. Graec. 9.526.

<sup>77</sup> וַיֵּרָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה־נִּזְרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם־בֵּית אֱלֹהִים וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם (Gen 28:17).

<sup>78</sup> καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγόμενον καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Rev 7:5.

<sup>80</sup> ...καὶ ἠνοίχθησαν οἱ οὐρανοί, καὶ εἶδον ὀράσεις θεοῦ.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Isa 63:19 (64:1); 3 Macc. 6:18; 2 Bar. 22:1; T. Levi 5:1; Matt 3:16; Acts 7:56; Rev 9:11.

between the human and the divine world is nullified so that the vertical line and the horizontal line come full circle.

### 9.13 Universal pilgrimage to the house of God (772-776)

772 πάσης δ' ἐκ γαίης λίβανον καὶ δῶρα πρὸς οἴκους<sup>82</sup>  
 773 οἴσουσιν μέγαλοιο θεοῦ· κοῦκ ἔσσεται ἄλλος  
 774 οἶκος ὑπ' ἀνθρώποισι καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι,  
 775 ἀλλ' ὃν ἔδωκε θεὸς πιστοῖς ἄνδρεςσι γεραίρειν.  
 776 [υἱὸν γὰρ καλέουσι βροτοὶ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ,]<sup>83</sup>

From the entire earth they will bring incense and gifts to the house of the Great God, and there will be no other house for future generations to know but only that which he has given for faithful men to honour, [interpolation]

The Sibyl's focus switches from the pious to the people of the penitent nations, who will bring gifts to the temple. Most of what is described in this passage is a rendition of famous texts like Zech 14:14-16 and Isa 2, 11, and 40 in which the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion/Jerusalem in the end time is described.<sup>84</sup> A song is put in the mouth of the penitent gentiles saying that they wish to learn the way of God (i.e. the righteous path) and that the law goes out from Jerusalem and is the light of God.<sup>85</sup>

Gifts will be brought to the temple from all countries - this is probably all countries that the Sibyl knows of (772-773). This motif previously occurred in line 718 (see comments there). It is a traditional image that can be found in the Hebrew Bible and its Greek translation.<sup>86</sup> The motif is also found in Philo who says that myriads of people from all corners of the earth make pilgrimage to the temple annually.<sup>87</sup> According to Holtz, the notion that they come from all corners of the earth signifies mankind as a whole rather than just the Jewish people.<sup>88</sup> However, it may also refer to the Jews in the Diaspora because according to Philo and Josephus Jews could be found throughout the entire habitable earth.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>82</sup> In classical literature the plural is sometimes used to designate a big building, cf. Homer, Od. 24.417; Aeschylus, Pers. 230, 524.

<sup>83</sup> This line is commonly regarded as a Christian interpolation (Geffcken, Collins, Merkel, Buitenwerf). Alexandre makes a conjecture from υἱὸν to ναόν. For discussion see Buitenwerf, 2003, 289f.

<sup>84</sup> According to Zech 14:16 the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to the temple will take place annually for the feast of tabernacles. Cf. Tob 13:13; 4QBer<sup>b</sup> 4.1.

<sup>85</sup> Isa 2:3. Cf. comment on lines 716-724.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Isa 2:1-5 (the nations will process to the house of God); 32:1-8; 35:10 (return to Zion); 40:3ff; 60; 62 (future Zion); 65:17-25 (peaceful conditions); Ps 71 (the kings of the earth will bring gifts to the temple and the nations will serve God); Zeph 3:9 (the world will serve God).

<sup>87</sup> Philo, Spec. 1.69.

<sup>88</sup> Holtz, 2007, 416.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Philo, Legat. 330, 370; Josephus, Ant. 19.290.

The wording of line 773-774 (κοὺκ ἔσσεται ἄλλος οἶκος ὑπ' ἀνθρώποισι) is similar to lines 629 and 760 (αὐτὸς γὰρ μόνος ἐστὶ θεὸς κοὺκ ἔστιν ἕτ' ἄλλος). Whereas lines 629 and 760 highlighted the uniqueness of God, line 773f claims that there will only be one temple once the nations acknowledge God's uniqueness. This shows once more that the temple is a symbol for God's sovereignty. The future tense (ἔσσεται) is used to highlight the future uniqueness of the temple. Again, it comes to the fore that the nations' final acceptance of God, the law, and the temple will happen in the end-time. According to Josephus, the one temple of the one God should be common to all people because in fact he is the common God of all people.<sup>90</sup> Josephus like the Sibyl does not give a hint of the temple's location.<sup>91</sup> Not locating the temple creates a feeling of identity for those in the Diaspora but all the more for converts.<sup>92</sup>

According to the Sibyl there will be no other house (οἶκος) among men, i.e. that there will be no other temple but the one of God. The term οἶκος for temple suggests that the Sibyl has a place of living rather than a sanctuary in mind. The traditional motif of God dwelling in the temple echoes here.<sup>93</sup> However, according to the Sibyl, God dwells in heaven rather than in the temple (line 807). In line 785 it is said that God will dwell in the maiden, which in the Hebrew Bible, is used as a metaphor for Jerusalem (see comments below). The motifs of God taking up residence in the temple or the city have converged here. In the divine *basilêion*, there will only be one temple because the people will realise that there is only one God.<sup>94</sup> The law and the temple will become the centers of all people.<sup>95</sup>

There is a visible tendency against the notion that God dwells in the temple in texts from the Second Temple period. In Acts 7:48 it is said that the Most High does not dwell in a house crafted by human hands.<sup>96</sup> For early Christianity the Jerusalem temple was a house of prayer and study, a large synagogue so to speak.<sup>97</sup> A critique of the temple cult was widespread in the

<sup>90</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.23.

<sup>91</sup> Εἷς ναὸς ἐνὸς θεοῦ φίλον γὰρ αἰεὶ παντὶ τὸ ὅμοιον κοινὸς ἀπάντων κοινοῦ θεοῦ ἀπάντων.

<sup>92</sup> Lieu, 2004, 224.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Isa 2:2 ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπ' ἁκρῶν τῶν ὀρέων καὶ ὑψωθήσεται ὑπεράνω τῶν βουνῶν καὶ ἤξουσιν ἐπ' αὐτὸ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. Cf. Tob 14:4-6; Bar 3:24. This seems to be incongruent with the view that God dwells in heaven. However, the Sibylline Oracle is a confluence of different traditions. Of the biblical traditions the one of God living in the temple as in a house is the older one, a common tradition in the ANE. However, after the destruction of the first temple, biblical theology became more and more transcendent so that eventually God took up residence in heaven and became Lord over all nations. On the development of the national cult see Pfeiffer, 1999, 26-64.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Isa 2:17; Zeph 3:9.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Lines 718-720 where the people send to the temple to acknowledge God's sovereignty and the righteousness of the law. See also comments there. For the relation of the temple and the law see Part III: the law and the Third Sibyl.

<sup>96</sup> In light of Isa 66:1-2 (LXX) where it is said that heaven is his throne. This corresponds to a fragment of Euripides (frg. 1130, ca. ca. 480 BC – 406 BC) transmitted by Clement of Alexandria (Strom. 5.75.1).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Eckey, 2000, 117.

Hellenistic-Roman era<sup>98</sup>, particularly in Qumran<sup>99</sup>. The initial notion that God does not dwell in the temple probably arose under the impression of the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE.

The Sibyl takes a position in this debate. However, the Sibyl is not per se critical of the temple cult; on the contrary, she repeatedly proclaims it as the one and only true cult. Yet she is of the opinion that God's presence is not restricted to the temple. God dwells in heaven until he takes up residence on earth so that the entire world becomes a metaphor for his presence.

#### 9.14 The way of God: preparing the divine dominion (777-779)

777 καὶ πᾶσαι πεδίοιο τρίβοι καὶ τρηχέες ὄχθαι  
778 οὐρεά θ' ὑψήεντα καὶ ἄγρια κύματα πόντου  
779 εὐβάτα καὶ εὐπλωτα γενήσεται ἡμασι κείνοις·

And all the paths of the plain, all rugged mountain ridges,  
the lofty mountains, and the wild waves of the sea,  
will be traversable in those days.<sup>100</sup>

Lines 777-779 describe the transformation of nature so that the earth will be easily traversable for the pilgrims who flock to the temple. The roads and mountains will be made plain; even the sea will be calm. Part of the imagery is borrowed from Isa 40:3-4<sup>101</sup>, where the prophet appeals to the people to prepare the paths of God, fill the valleys and make low the mountain. As in other instances, the Sibyl shares some of the vocabulary with Isa LXX (πεδίοιο τρίβοι καὶ τρηχέες ὄχθαι). In Pss. Sol. 8:16-17 the Isaianic imagery is taken up.<sup>102</sup> In v17 it is said that the princes of the land made even the rough ways for God's instrument to walk in. The passage 'mocks the people who greeted Pompey with joy in 63 CE with a parody of Isaiah's book of consolation'<sup>103</sup>. Just like the Sibyl the psalmist made use of a biblical allusion to illustrate an event of his own time.<sup>104</sup> The ways and mountains recur in the Sibyl's prophecy.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Rau, 2000, 46-52.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Ego, 1990.

<sup>100</sup> Trans. Buitenwerf, 2003, 245.

<sup>101</sup> 3) φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς **τρίβους** τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν 4) πᾶσα φάραγξ πληρωθήσεται καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ βουνὸς ταπεινωθήσεται καὶ ἔσται πάντα τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθεῖαν καὶ ἡ **τραχεῖα εἰς πεδία**.

<sup>102</sup> Ἐπευκτὴ ἡ ὁδὸς σου, δεῦτε εἰσέλθατε μετ' εἰρήνης. ὠμάλισαν ὁδοὺς τραχείας ἀπὸ εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ, ἤνοιξαν πύλας ἐπὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ, ἐστεφάνωσαν τείχη αὐτῆς.

<sup>103</sup> Atkinson, 2004, 62. The Psalm has been much discussed because of its manifold historical allusions. See for instance Schüpphaus, 1977. Atkinson dates it after 63 BCE but prior Pompey's death as it seems to be unaware of it (Atkinson, 2004, 84f).

<sup>104</sup> Atkinson, 2004, 62.

<sup>105</sup> For the motif of the paths of God see comment on lines 716-731.

Again, the Sibyl does not quote from Isaiah the reference is certainly intended. In Isa 40:3 the people are admonished to prepare the ways for the Lord<sup>106</sup>, the passage that is quoted in Mark 1:3. Within the context of Isaiah the prophecy heralds the advent of Cyrus and with it the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian Exile. However, a closer look at the text reveals more than one layer.<sup>107</sup> Berges notes that *τρίβοι τοῦ θεοῦ* does not signify the *terra intermedia* between Mesopotamia and Palestina but is a metaphor for the desolate Jerusalem and the people during and shortly after the Exile.<sup>108</sup> The Hebrew *דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה* of the MT, which the LXX renders as *τρίβοι θεοῦ*, never designates an exact spatial way but rather an ethical religious way of life according to the divine will.<sup>109</sup> It is journey as figure, i.e. cleaning up of ethical and religious obstacles. The wilderness is not the physical desert but constitutes the graphic location of God's wrath in judgement which is fulfilled in Isa 51:3.<sup>110</sup> The preparing of the ways in Isa 40:3 is essentially preparing the divine dominion. Similarly in the Third Sibyl the accessibility of nature and of the roads are features of the divine dominion. Other than the prophet Isaiah, the Sibyl is not looking for the restoration of the Jewish people in the land of Israel and their rise to political power. The Sibyl's divine dominion is universal and final. That the ways and paths will be easily traversable also signifies that it will not be an effort to live according to the law.

That the paths and the ways (*τρίβοι καὶ τρηχέες*) may indeed refer to an ethical condition rather than a mere geographical transformation can also be drawn from line 721. There, the penitent nations acknowledge that they had gone astray<sup>111</sup> from the path of the Immortal by practicing idolatry (*ἡμεῖς δ' ἄθανάτοιο τρίβου πεπλανημένοι ἦμεν*). Now that the penitent nations of the Third Sibyl acknowledge God as the sole ruler and the giver of the law, the way is clear for the divine dominion. The vertical line draws to a close. The transformation of the world is twofold: it is physical and spatial insofar as obstacles and dangers will be removed yet it is also ethical as it presupposes judgement and conversion of the nations.

Even though the Sibyl is indebted to Isaiah the sea metaphor is absent in Isaiah. Several descriptions of the Golden Age, however, tell of the absence of trade which will make sailing

<sup>106</sup> *φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν.*

<sup>107</sup> Isa 40 picks up where Isa 12 (a song of praise to God) left off. In Isa 40:9 the one bringing good tidings is feminine and picks up on the female Zion in 12:6 (the maiden). In verse 10 God returns to Zion with strength. In Isa 52:7-10 the one bearing good tidings is male and Zion is the one they receive and God shall reign (*βασιλεύσει σου ὁ θεός*) to resume his kingship in Jerusalem. In Isa 62 this is picked up on when the ends of the earth herald the coming weal for Jerusalem. Isaiah is essentially aimed at the restoration of Jerusalem.

<sup>108</sup> Berges, 2008, 104.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Gen 18:19; Deut 9:16; Judg 2:22; 2 Sam 22:22; 1 Kgs 16:26 (the kings of Israel walk in the ways of Jeroboam and ignore God); 2 Kgs 21:22; Isa 2:3; 40:3; 51:6; 55:7-9 (the wicked is urged to forsake his sinful way); Jer 5:4-5; Hos 14:10; Ps 1:6 (way of the wicked); 18:22; 138:5; Prov 10:29; 2 Chr 17:6.

<sup>110</sup> Berges, 2008, 105.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. also lines 220-228.

unnecessary.<sup>112</sup> Fear of sailing was a natural one in the ancient Mediterranean regions and its dangers are widely acknowledged amongst Greco-Roman writers.<sup>113</sup> The danger of sailing fits the Diaspora setting of the Third Sibyl.

### 9.15 Eternal peace and righteous wealth (780-784)

Line 780 starts a new subject. Whereas in lines 770-779 the physical features of the divine kingdom such as the pacification of nature and the removal of obstacles were described, lines 780-784 describe the peaceful conditions that will befall the people that live to see it. The passage is framed by two statements in line 780 and 784 respectively. Line 780 heralds that at that time, peace will be upon the entire earth (πᾶσα γὰρ εἰρήνη ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἰκνεῖται) while line 784 concludes the passage that this is the judgement and rule of God.

780 πᾶσα γὰρ εἰρήνη ἀγαθῶν ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἰκνεῖται·  
 781 ῥομφαίαν δ' ἀφελοῦσι θεοῦ μέγαλοιο προφηταί·  
 782 αὐτοὶ γὰρ κριταὶ εἰσι βροτῶν βασιλεῖς τε δίκαιοι.<sup>114</sup>  
 783 ἔσται δὲ καὶ πλοῦτος ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δίκαιος·

Nothing but peace for the good will come upon the earth,  
 swords will be taken away by the prophets of the Great God  
 who will be judges for mortals and righteous kings  
 and righteous wealth will be among mankind,

In line 780 it is said that peace for the good will come upon the earth entirely.<sup>115</sup> It is safe to say that the genitive in line 780 (ἀγαθῶν) is an objective genitive so that peace will come for (not from) the good people. It is essential that the world of the end time will be an entirely peaceful one since war is one of the main themes of the Third Sibyl. Ever since the reign of the Titans the kingdoms of the earth have battled each other for world dominion. Only at the end of days this will come to an end. This notion is paralleled in the Hebrew Bible<sup>116</sup> as well as in perceptions of the Golden Age in Greek writings.<sup>117</sup>

It is also said that righteous wealth (πλοῦτος δίκαιος) will be among the people at that time (783). Love for money is considered as one of the key reasons of war in Sib.Or. 3.<sup>118</sup> In the eschaton many evils that were described through the course of the book are transformed into their opposite. In the eulogy in lines 234-245 the people of God were exalted as being

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Virgil, Ecl. 4.37-38; Ovid, Metam. 1.94-96.

<sup>113</sup> See Homer, Od. 5.283-493; Hesiod, Op. 663-677; Aeschylus, Suppl. 134-137; Jonah 1; Mark 4:35-51; Acts 27:9-10; 2 Cor 11:25. Cf. also Wis 14:3.

<sup>114</sup> For comment on lines 781-782 see below.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. lines 755, and 780.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Isa 2:5; Ps 46:10; Zech 9:10. In Ezek 38:11 peaceful life in the land is described which has no wall, no bars nor gates.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Cf. Philo, Praem. 87; Hesiod, Op. 125-126; Virgil, Ecl. 4.22, 24.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. lines 179-181, 189, 350ff and comments there.

righteous, not stealing from one another, and assisting the needy. In line 244-245 it was said that the wealthy give to the poor and needy. Now that the people of God have fulfilled their role as moral guides and nations have accepted the law, everyone will distribute their wealth righteously.

### 9.16 The role of the pious: prophets who are judges and just kings (781-782)

A central question with regard to the establishment of the divine dominion on earth in the Third Sibyl is the role of the people of God within it. A few lines in the section at hand shed light on that question. In Lines 770-771 it is said that when God will establish his divine dominion the pious will receive all joys (χάρματα πάντα), immortal sense (νοῦν ἀθάνατον), and eternal gladness (αἰώνιον εὐφροσύνην). Χάρματα and νοῦς are features that were attributed to the pious earlier in the text, namely in the eulogy in lines 573ff. There it was said that they adhere to the βουλή (will) and νοῦς (purpose) of the Most High (574) bringing joy (χάρμα) to all mortals (581, see comment there). Line 581 draws from lines 194-195; the people of God are moral guides for all people and therefore will bring great joy to them.

In lines 165, 196, 300 and 821 νοῦς is used of the Sibyl receiving divine revelation. The promise of immortal νοῦς could be suggesting divine insight. The promise of eternal gladness is reminiscent of the prophecy about the maiden (786, see comments there). The pious will be rewarded for their adherence to the law and their faith in God. When the divine dominion is established, they will have fulfilled their role as moral guides for all mortals and they will be rewarded for their piety by receiving all joys and divine insight in return (cf. lines 194-195).

781 ῥομφαίαν δ' ἀφελοῦσι θεοῦ μέγαλοιο προφῆται·  
782 αὐτοὶ γὰρ κριταὶ εἰσι βροτῶν βασιλεῖς τε δίκαιοι.

Prophets of the Great God will take away the sword:  
They will be judges and righteous kings for mortals.

Some scholars have claimed that the statements in lines 194-195 and 781-782 refer to political superiority of the people of God at the end of days.<sup>119</sup> Superiority, however, is manifested in the law and in adhering to it, not in political supremacy. As a result, the people of God can be moral guides for all mankind.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>119</sup> 'From lines 768b-771 and 781-782, it becomes clear that the author of Sib. Or. III conceived of the future divine kingdom as the supremacy of the Jews over other peoples.' (Buitenwerf, 2003, 289).

<sup>120</sup> See also comment on lines 194-195.

Lines 781-782 describe that swords will be taken away by prophets of the Great God and that they will be judges of mortal men and just kings. The motif of the absence of swords as a metaphor for the end of war has already occurred in 751.<sup>121</sup>

In light of line 582 where it is said that the pious would be exalted as prophets, scholars have claimed that the reference to the prophets who are judges and kings refers to a political Jewish dominion at the end of days.<sup>122</sup> Buitenwerf<sup>123</sup> draws attention to a couple of texts that illustrate the idea of the Judeans ruling and judging other peoples in the end time.<sup>124</sup> Looking at the individual passages, however, it is clear that none of them knows the combination of prophecy and kingship. The combination of kingship and judgment, on the other hand, is obvious, since the king is always also the judge.

In line 781 it is not clear who the prophets are. By their very nature, prophets are installed by God. In line 582 it was said that the pious would be exalted as prophets in the future and according to line 583 they will bring joy (χάρμα) to all mortals. I do not believe that there is a particular connection between lines 583 and 781f at all. Since the Sibyl herself is referred to as a prophetess several times it can also not be deduced that the prophets are to be equated with the people of God let alone the Jews or Judeans.<sup>125</sup> The fact that prophets will be kings highlights that only people with insight into the divine will can be just rulers.<sup>126</sup> The Sibyl is not clear about the identity of the prophets. However, in the Hebrew Bible we find the nation that technically the Israelites as a whole can be prophets through the giving of God's spirit.<sup>127</sup>

In order to shed light on who the prophet kings are, a closer look at the relation of prophecy and kingship is required. The combination of prophecy and kingship is unparalleled in Jewish literature.<sup>128</sup> To my knowledge, there is no similar combination to be found in biblical writings. However, kingship and prophecy were indeed tightly connected as prophets were commonly in the service of a king or part of an institution (such as a temple or a military

---

<sup>121</sup> For the removal of the sword as a metaphor for the cessation of war cf. Ezek 39:9; Mic 4:3; 1 Macc 9:73; 4Q246 II, 6.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 291, Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 172f.

<sup>123</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 291

<sup>124</sup> Such as Wis 3:7-8; Dan 7:18, 22, 27; 1QpHab V, 3-5; 1QM XVII, 5-9; 1Cor 6:2.

<sup>125</sup> Contra Buitenwerf, 2003, 289. As I have pointed out before, Jews or Judeans are never mentioned in the entire book.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Wis 6:23.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Num 11:69-29; Joel 3:1f.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Collins, 1984a, 379 n. c4. Yet he points to some sources that use the combination in one way or another; cf. Philo, Mos. 2.1 says that Moses is both prophet and king or Josephus, Ant. 13.299 who says that John Hyrcanus was said to have the gift of prophecy. In 11QPs<sup>a</sup> XVII, 11 David is said to have been granted the gift of prophecy (נבואה) by the most high to compose his songs.



base) in the Ancient Near East.<sup>129</sup> Under the impact of the exile, kingship and prophecy were antagonised by the deuteronomists.<sup>130</sup>

Line 782 is vaguely reminiscent of the much discussed passages Exod 19:4 and Rev 1:6 where priesthood and kingship are combined.<sup>131</sup> However, it is prophecy instead of priesthood that is highlighted here. Although there are several passages that deal with the temple cult, the Sibyl makes no mention of priesthood.<sup>132</sup> The fact that prophets will be kings rather than priests may point to a critique of the intervention of kingship in the succession of priesthood as found in 1 and 2 Macc which echoes an anti-Hellenistic position.<sup>133</sup> In 1 Macc 10:20 Jonathan is appointed High Priest by Syrian King Alexander Balas in 152 BCE. This illegitimate assumption of the High priesthood is the probable reason for the divide between Qumran sect and the Jerusalem priesthood.<sup>134</sup> Jonathan is also a likely candidate for the ‘wicked priest’ in the Qumran texts.<sup>135</sup>

An interesting remark that may shed light on the combination of prophecy and kingship in the Third Sibyl can be found in Josephus’ comment on Deut 17:8-13. If a judge fails to come to a decision the matter should be brought to Jerusalem where the High Priest, the prophet and the Sanhedrin shall determine as they see fit.<sup>136</sup> The prophet is explicitly mentioned next to the High Priest, who according to the Hellenistic-Persian Period also fulfills the role of a judge. For Josephus this higher authority was part of an ideal theocratic legal order constituted by the (biblical) law<sup>137</sup> as he defines it in Ant. 4.223.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, the Sibyl is looking for an ideal theocratic utopia in which prophets like her have legal authority. This is the utopian counterpart to the Sibyl being disbelieved in the present.<sup>139</sup> The combination of

<sup>129</sup> Cf. 2 Sam 2; 7; 12 (Nathan); 24 (Gad); 1 Kgs 1; 2 Chr 29:23 (Nathan and Gad. Cf. TUAT II 56; 60; 73 (Assyrian); 94-93 (Mari); 111 (Egyptian); 138 (Deir Alla Inscription).

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Jer 21-23:8; Jer 29:16-19. The deuteronomists blame the destruction of the temple and the exile on Israel’s faulty kings who went astray while the prophets are messengers of the divine will. Furthermore, early Judaism became more and more Torah centred after Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians and the people were deported into exile. The Torah centred religion was incompatible with the idea of a king other than JHWH (who is as such also the lawgiver). Evidently other circles hoped for the restoration of kingship but eventually those hopes were transferred unto the endtime (cf. Amos 9:11ff; Jer 33:14-16; Mic 5:1-4; Isa 9:5-6; 11:1-9; Hag 2:20-23).

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Rev 5:10. In Jub. 16:18 and 33:20 it is rendered as ‘kingdom and priests’, although wrongly translated in Charlesworth, OTP 2. ‘Kingdom and priesthood’ also in Philo, Abr. 56 (βασιλειον καὶ ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον); Sobr. 66 (βασιλειον καὶ ἱεράτευμα θεοῦ); 2 Macc 2:17 (βασιλειον καὶ ἱεράτευμα); 4Q504 4 (מלכת) [כהנים וגוי קדוש]. Cf. also Ps 110:4 (David as a priest-king like Melchizedek).

<sup>132</sup> This being another reason to object a relation to the temple of Onias at Leontopolis which Collins has proposed repeatedly.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. 1 Macc 10:20; 2 Macc 4:7-49. Cf. Collins, 2000, 77-83.

<sup>134</sup> Collins, 1997, 244.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. 1QpHab 1:13; 8:8, 9:9; 11:4; 12:2, 8.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Josephus, Ant. 4.218.

<sup>137</sup> For Josephus and theocracy see Part III: the law and Utopia.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Maier, 2001, 162.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Line 816. For critique of Sibylline prophecy Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.3; Phlegon, FGH 257 F 37 (V) 11.2-3, 5; Virgil, Aen. 3.443; Cicero, Div. 1.4, 2.110.

prophecy and kingship found its way into the New Testament and Rabbinic literature. It can be found in the gospel of John where it is used of Jesus.<sup>140</sup>

The characters in question combine three decisive qualities: prophecy, judgement, and kingship. The prophets, who will be judges and kings are representatives of God and his divine will. At the end of the section (784) God's sovereignty is stressed once more, it is thus likely that the role of the prophets will be temporary. The righteousness of the kings and the fact that they are chosen by God stands over and against the impious mortal leaders who repeatedly brought war upon the world. The prophets of God will end war and judge the people, yet they will not dominate the nations on a permanent political basis.<sup>141</sup> In fact, there will be no one left to rule over as only the pious and the penitent will live to see the final age and all people will adhere to one common law. It is the prophets' task to take away the sword (a metaphor for peace) and be righteous judges and kings. Essentially, God will bring about perpetual peace via the prophets that he will inaugurate to bring about the peaceful conditions. The prophets are agents of God by their very nature.

Rather than the nature of the divine dominion, lines 780-84 describe how it and the peace that constitutes it will be brought about. The righteous people who will survive the divine judgment and enter the divine dominion will be ruled by none other than God. The Sibyl is not interested in the detailed political administration of the divine dominion. Whatever the exact role of the prophets and kings, God is the true king who will pass judgement. This is evident from line 784 which is a summary of the passage. Lines 781-784 outline the peaceful conditions and how they will be brought about. It is a summary of the entire passage. Line 784 is a summary of the entire section (αὕτη γὰρ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ κρίσις ἡδὲ καὶ ἀρχή). It is the final judgment after a period of weal and woe and the establishment of God's eternal reign. A similar technique is used in line 154-155 where the Sibyl summarised the Titan War. The terms κρίσις and ἀρχή recur. This underlines God's rightful claim to rule and judgement once more and how the two are interwoven. As previously stated, the interlink of rule and judgement, especially in relation to God, is a central theme for the Sibyl. The absence of war

---

<sup>140</sup> John 6:14-15. 'The notion which this passage takes for granted, but which from the standpoint of common views of first-century Jewish and Christian eschatology is difficult to explain, is that 'the prophet' is naturally to be 'a king'.' Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 88.. Meeks relates Jesus to the Moses tradition in rabbinic Judaism where he is the ideal prophet and king so that Jesus becomes a prophet like Moses as he is anticipated in Deut 18:15-22. See ibid for discussion. According to Theobald the people expect Jesus (as "messianic" king) to make real the messianic utopia on earth (Michael Theobald, *Das Evangelium Nach Johannes: Kapitel 1-12* [Regensburger Neues Testament; Regensburg: Pustet, 2009], 437).

<sup>141</sup> Contra Buitenwerf, 2003, 291; Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 172-173.

and righteous distribution of wealth or absence of private property is also a common feature of biblical and classical utopias.<sup>142</sup>

### 9.17 Conclusion of the passage (784)

784 αὕτη γὰρ μέγαλοιο θεοῦ κρίσις ἡδὲ καὶ ἀρχή.  
This is the judgement and rule of God.

The statement in line 784 exemplifies that the peaceful conditions and the distribution of righteous wealth will be enacted by God, they are part of his judgement and rule. The combination of κρίσις and ἀρχή already occurred in line 743. Lines 767 and 784 frame the passage. Whereas line 767 announced that God would establish his dominion on earth line 784 concludes that the establishment of peace for the good people and the judgment which is made by the prophets is the rule and judgment of God. The passage rings of Dan 7:27 (MT) where it is said that kingdom and dominion are given to the holy people of the Most High.<sup>143</sup> However, this passage is not about the election of Israel. On the contrary, it has a universal outlook as the differentiation between righteous and wicked is not one by ethnical or geographical means. The eternal *basilêion* will be established for all righteous people.

### 9.18 The dwelling of the creator in the maiden (785-787)

785 εὐφράνθητι, κόρη, καὶ ἀγάλλεο· σοὶ γὰρ ἔδωκεν  
786 εὐφροσύνην αἰῶνος, ὃς οὐρανὸν ἔκτισε καὶ γῆν.  
787 ἐν σοὶ δ' οἰκήσει· σοὶ δ' ἔσσειται ἀθάνατον φῶς·

Rejoice, maiden, and exalt: For he  
who has created heaven and earth  
has given you eternal gladness.  
He will dwell in you, there shall be an immortal light for you,

In Line 785 the Sibyl switches to the second person and addresses a maiden (κόρη). The maiden shall rejoice because God has given her eternal gladness. The Sibyl tells the maiden that God will dwell her. By contrast, God is designated as θεὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν (God who dwells in heaven) in line 807.

#### Excursus: God as creator (κτίστης)

In the Third Sibyl God is κτίστης (704) and ὃς οὐρανὸν ἔκτισε καὶ γῆν (786). There is only one occurrence of the noun κτίστης and in the Third Sibyl (704). However, the verb κτίζω has two occurrences (543, 786). Even though the beginning of the book is lost, we can assume that the Sibyl presupposes the creation of heaven and earth by God. It is likely that there was an account of the creation of the world in the now lost

<sup>142</sup> Lev 26:6; Isa 2:1-4; 9:1-6; 11:1-10; 65:16b-25; Ezek 34:25; Zech 9:9-10; 14:1-15; Cf. Hesiod, Op. 125-126; Virgil, Ecl. 4.22, 24.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Also Wis 3:1-8; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30; Eph 2:6.

beginning of the book. However, by designating him as creator, the habitable earth as men's domain and heaven as divine domain are presupposed. The epithet κτίστης is a common one attributed to the Jewish God.<sup>144</sup> The usage of the term 'indicates a Jewish background'.<sup>145</sup> In the MT God being creator of heaven and earth is at the same time king of the world and king of the other Gods.<sup>146</sup>

Of the Greek gods, κτίστης is used sporadically.<sup>147</sup> In pagan texts<sup>148</sup> κτίστης is not an epithet of Zeus but it is used of Apollon, Artemis, Asclepios, Dionysos, Tion, Hestia, Amaseia, and Isis wherefore it does not designate "creator" in the biblical sense but "founder" of a community or cult.<sup>149</sup> By the Greco-Roman era this role was often attributed to the emperor.<sup>150</sup> It may be because of the political notion that the term was applied to God by the LXX. Although the most common term in the LXX to describe God's creative power is ποιεῖν, the LXX uses κτίστης as a divine attribute to show God's power and to differentiate him from idols.<sup>151</sup> The Sibyl, however, only makes use of κτίζω. She adapts the MT formula 'who created heaven and earth'<sup>152</sup> which in the MT occurs with ποιεῖω and κτίζω of which she only uses the latter (ὃς οὐρανὸν ἔκτισε καὶ γῆν).<sup>153</sup> Coupling God's creative power with his current power is taken from tradition; being the creator of heaven and earth he is their ruler accordingly.<sup>154</sup> The Sibyl uses LXX phraseology<sup>155</sup> and makes it clear that God is the creator of heaven and earth alike and hence he is the lord over both of these spheres. When οὐρανός occurs alone, it denotes God's divine abode and when earth (γῆ) occurs alone it designates the sphere of men accordingly. When they appear together, however, they can also signify the cosmos at large. The polar formulation is a merism saying that God is creator of all space, human and divine alike. Because there is only one creator there is only one sovereign.<sup>156</sup> The Sibyl takes the concept to the extreme by adding the epithet μόναρχος (704).

The preference of the term κτίστης in the Third Sibyl and other pseudepigrapha<sup>157</sup> (over against the NT) can be explained by the influence of Greek philosophy.<sup>158</sup> The philosophical debate and the endeavor to harmonise Greek cosmology and Jewish creation tradition echo in the fragments of Aristobul and in the works of Philo and Josephus.<sup>159</sup> Hence the term κτίστης was probably adapted into the image of the Jewish God because it matched the political claims that were tied to it and helped to demonstrate the Jewish God as true ruler due to his creative qualities.<sup>160</sup> Because heaven and earth were created by God they are his sphere of control. It should be noted that κτίστης occurs as an honorary title on inscriptions from Asia Minor. It is probable that the NT avoids the term because of that.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs 22:32; 2 Macc 1:24; 4 Macc 11:5; Sir 18:1; 24:8. Note that it has only one occurrence in the NT, namely in 1 Pet 4:19.

<sup>145</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 545.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Ps 94:3. ὅτι θεὸς μέγας κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς θεοὺς.

<sup>147</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 359.

<sup>148</sup> Note that in a non-religious context κτίστης simply means founder or builder (LSJ, κτίστης).

<sup>149</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 359 n. 73 cf. SEG VIII 549.11.

<sup>150</sup> Plutarch, Reg. imp. apophth. 207 B3 (of Alexander); Cic. 22e; Cf. Josephus, C. Ap. 2.39.

<sup>151</sup> 2 Sam 22:32.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Gen 1:1; 14:19; Exod 20:11; 2 Kgs 19:15; 1 Esd 6:12 et al.

<sup>153</sup> Sib. Or. 3.543, 786.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Gen 24:3; Deut 3:24; 4 Kgdms 19:15; 2 Esd 5:11; Jdt 9:12; Isa 45:7f, 18ff; Jer 10:11; T. Ab. 1.16.2.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Gen 14:19, 22; Dan 4:37; 14:5; 1 Ezra 6:12; Jdt 13:18 and Wisd 11:17 where God ultimately becomes the creator of the Kosmos. At the same time, the LXX uses κτίζω in only 17 out of the 46 instances in which it reads בָּרָא as to create which suggests that the term took on theological significance only gradually. In the NT it is affirmed that God created all things (cf. Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Acts 17:24). This excludes emanation. Heaven as well as earth is part of creation. W. Foerster, TWNT, "κτίζω," 3:1000-1032.

<sup>156</sup> Isa 45:6.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Let. Aris. 16; Sib. Or. 3.10; 3.35; 5.433; Jos. Asen. 8.2.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Zimmermann, 2007, 354-359.

<sup>159</sup> Aristob. 5; Philo, Opif. 170ff; Josephus, Ant. 1.154-168.

<sup>160</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 359.

The notion that God will resume his residence in the temple or the city is a motif known from the Hebrew Bible and is tied to the return from the Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of the temple. The motif 'daughter Zion/Jerusalem' is restricted to the prophetic books, lamentations and some psalms. While the daughter is usually spoken of in the context of eschatological restoration<sup>161</sup>, she can also be the object of prophetic critique so that she is labeled a whore or adulteress<sup>162</sup>. The title 'daughter' is also used for other cities.<sup>163</sup> The proverbial maiden in which God will dwell in line 785 is a familiar motif from Zech 3:14 where the maiden is none other than Zion (Jerusalem).<sup>164</sup> However, in the case of the Sibyl the idiom of prophetic personifications of places via the κοπή in line 785<sup>165</sup> is blurred by the omission of any place-name or any reference to Israel or Jerusalem. As far as I am aware, Lightfoot is the only interpreter to have addressed this issue<sup>166</sup>: 'The omission has blurred the distinction between metaphor and literal address to a maiden'<sup>167</sup>. Lightfoot furthermore proposes that the Sibyl owes the omission of a place-name to her tendency 'to wobble between the particular and the general though with an overall more universalistic form towards the end'<sup>168</sup>.

The motif of rejoicing is well in accord with texts such as Isa 12:6; Zech 3:14 and Jer 38:4 LXX (MT Jer 31:4) where daughter Zion (Jerusalem) is addressed.<sup>169</sup> Some of the vocabulary of Isa 12:6 recurs here.<sup>170</sup> The Sibyl is certainly indebted to these prophetic traditions but she recasts them in her own way. The prophetic texts refer to a specific place, be it the daughter Zion of Zechariah or the virgin Israel of Jeremiah. In Zech God is said to come and dwell in Zion's midst, Jeremiah's virgin will be rebuild.

In the famous poem in Sirach 24 it is not God but wisdom itself who takes up residence in Jacob/Israel and in the Temple on Mount Zion accordingly (Sir 24:8-11). After wisdom, who came from the mouth of the Most High and has dwelt in heaven (3-4), has searched for a place to reside on earth, God commands her to make her dwelling in Israel (8). In verse 10,

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Isa 52:2; Mic 4:8-10, 13; Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:14; 9:9; Lam 4:22; Tob 3:10-18; Bar 4:30-5:6; Gal 4:21-31; John 12:15.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Isa 1:8; 37:22; Jer 5:1; 6:2; 6:23; Lam 2:13.

<sup>163</sup> Isa 6:2; Jer 50:42; Ezek 16; Zech 2:11; Ps 137:8 (Babel); Ps 45:13 (Tyre); Jerusalem as a widow cf. 4 Bar 4.12ff; as a whore Isa 1:21; Hos 2:7; Ninive as a whore Nah 3:4. Cf. also Babylon the whore in Rev 17-18.

<sup>164</sup> Χαῖρε σφόδρα, θύγατερ Σιών, κήρυσσε, θύγατερ Ιερουσαλημ· εὐφραίνου καὶ κατατέρπου ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου, θύγατερ Ιερουσαλημ.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Zech 2:10; Isa 6:2; Ezek 16; Rev 12; Jerusalem as a widow cf. 4 Bar 4.12ff; as a whore Isa 1:21; Hos 2:7; Babylon as a whore, Ninive as a whore Nah 3:4. Cf. also the whore in Rev 17-18.

<sup>166</sup> Contra. Buitenwerf, 2003, 291; Kurfes, 1951. 299; Gauger, 1998, 502.

<sup>167</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 236. Cf. also lines 357-359 where Rome was addressed as παρθένος.

<sup>168</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 236 n. 101.

<sup>169</sup> In Isa 12:6 it is the inhabitants of Zion that are addressed. ἔτι οἰκοδομήσω σε, καὶ οἰκοδομηθήσῃ, παρθένος Ισραηλ. Cf. Isa 62:5.

<sup>170</sup> ἀγαλλιᾶσθε καὶ εὐφραίνεσθε οἱ κατοικοῦντες σιών ὅτι ὑψώθη ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ ἰσραηλ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς. Cf. 1. En. 25:5 and comment on line 702.

wisdom serves God in the holy tent<sup>171</sup>, i.e. the temple. Just like the tent finds its resting place on Mount Zion where it is replaced by the temple, wisdom finds her residence in Israel. Later on in verse 23, wisdom is identified as βιβλος διαθήκης θεοῦ ὑψίστου (the book of covenant of the Most High) so that implicitly it is the Torah who resides in Israel. Seen in that context, wisdom manifests itself in Israel through the Law of God.

Although the maiden brings to mind the daughter of Zion and virgin Israel of the biblical prophets, the passage demands a closer look. If God is supposed to dwell in the maiden it is obvious that the reference must be to a place. The phrase ἐν σοὶ δ' οἰκήσει seems to be a strange variation of prophetic formula as a reference like 'in your midst' is absent. While the Sibyl with all probability had the biblical prophecies in mind, she has intentionally omitted references to the land or the city of Jerusalem. Her approach may be more universalistic, so that technically the entire earth, which she frequently addresses, could be the maiden.<sup>172</sup> God will establish his dominion among all people (767f). By analogy it can be deduced that he will dwell among all people as well.

The reference to the immortal light also has parallels in Isa 2:5 and 60:1-3 as well as in Wis<sup>173</sup>, Tobit<sup>174</sup>, 1 Enoch<sup>175</sup>, and Revelation<sup>176</sup>. Isa 2 speaks of the pilgrimage of the nations to Mount Zion and the end of all war. In verse 5 the house of Jacob is admonished to walk in the light of the Lord<sup>177</sup>. Isa 60:1 is a song addressed to Jerusalem where it is that the light and the glory of God will be upon it.<sup>178</sup> In both texts, Zion/Jerusalem is envisaged and explicitly mentioned. In prophecy and the psalms in the Hebrew Bible, Zion is often imagined as the centre of the earth and is often coupled with hopes for the return of the Jewish people to Zion and the restoration of the same.<sup>179</sup> In Isa 65 a new heaven and a new earth will be established in Zion.<sup>180</sup> Echoes of such prophecies ring in the Third Sibyl, however, the particularistic

<sup>171</sup> The tent refers to the tabernacle that God commanded Moses to build in the desert cf. Exod 25:8-9; 26:1-37.

<sup>172</sup> As seen in the Sibyl's account of the Titanomachy the earth, γαῖα / γῆ, is traditionally feminine so that grammatically the identification is possible.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Wis 18:4: οἱ κατακλείστους φυλάξαντες τοὺς υἱοὺς σου δι' ὧν ἡμελλεν τὸ ἄφθαρτον νόμου φῶς τῷ αἰῶνι διδοσθαι

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Tob 13:12: καὶ εὐφράναι ἐν σοὶ τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους καὶ ἀγαπήσαι ἐν σοὶ τοὺς ταλαιπώρους εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος.

<sup>175</sup> 1. En. 45:4 (Then will I cause Mine Elect One to dwell among them. And I will transform the heaven and make it an eternal blessing and light); 58:3 (And the righteous shall be in the light of the sun, And the elect in the light of eternal life); 92:4 (He will be gracious to the righteous and give him eternal uprightness, And He will give him power so that he shall be (endowed) with goodness and righteousness, And he shall walk in eternal light). Trans. Charlesworth, OTP 1.

<sup>176</sup> Rev 21:23-25.

<sup>177</sup> δεῦτε πορευθῶμεν τῷ φωτὶ κυρίου.

<sup>178</sup> Φωτίζου φωτίζου, Ιερουσαλημ, ἦκει γάρ σου τὸ φῶς, καὶ ἡ δόξα κυρίου ἐπὶ σὲ ἀνατέταλκεν.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Isa 35:10; 60; 62; Ps 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 122; 132.

<sup>180</sup> Isa 65:17-25.

reference to Zion and/or Jerusalem have disappeared. In 1. En.<sup>181</sup>, on the other hand, eternal light is said to be upon the righteous and elect of God. From 1. En. 58:3 it is furthermore evident that the eternal light is related to eternal life. That 1. En. and the Sibyl are not far removed has been observed in recent scholarship.<sup>182</sup> Both are related to the flood, both are human prophets, and both have a focus on the coming divine judgement and the ultimate establishment of divine dominion.

Of all the above texts, Wis 18:4 is the only one that is not related to the city. Wisdom speaks of the immortal light of the law (ἄφθαρτος νόμου φῶς) that is given to the world through the sons of God.<sup>183</sup> The eternal light can also be seen as a reference to the divine light in Gen 1:3. This springs to mind because God is referred to as creator in line 786.

The immortal light in the Third Sibyl is reminiscent of several biblical texts and signifies the eternal nature of the divine dominion. The immortal light also conveys the notion of safety and divine protection. In most of the aforementioned texts the light is related to the city. It is probable that the Sibyl copied the motif from the traditional texts dealing with the maiden Jerusalem.

It remains unsaid who or what the maiden is. As in many other instances in the Third Sibyl, the intended reader probably would have had an idea. The omission of a direct identification is intended. The Sibyl intentionally omitted a reference to Jerusalem - then again she never mentions a place or a name with regard to the Jews, the land, and the temple. The only instance in which she locates the εὐσεβεῖς is in line 218 where she locates them in Ur Chaldea (see comment there). As I have previously proposed, the Sibyl not only presupposes that her readers knew what she was referring to, but also that the people, the land, and the city may have had a different (spatial) significance to her readership (Diaspora Jews) as to those in Judea/Palestine based on their position outside the land. These people regarded the Diaspora as their homeland, not Judea where they may have never been.<sup>184</sup> ‘Although Jerusalem loomed large in their self-perception as a nation, few of them had seen it, and few were likely to.’<sup>185</sup> The preference of homeland over Diaspora is rather a modern

<sup>181</sup> The extant book of Enoch probably was finished by the first century BCE as is evident from the findings at Qumran. Cf. Collins, 1998, 43f.

<sup>182</sup> For the relation of the First and Second Sibyl to Enoch see Lightfoot, 2007, 70ff.

<sup>183</sup> See also Part III: The divine dominion in related Literature.

<sup>184</sup> Diaspora experience has been deconstructed from two quite divergent angles of which the negative approach dissolves into exile and punishment and the hope for return to the “homeland”. The alternate concept takes a different route; the Jews require no territorial sanctuary or legitimisation. Rather than that, scripture becomes the central aspect; their homeland resides in the text. ‘Their “portable temple” serves the purpose. A geographic restoration in the land is therefore superfluous, even subversive [...] Diaspora, in short, is no burden [...] This justifies a primary attachment to the land of one’s residence, rather than the home of the fathers.’ Gruen, 2004, 232 contra Barclay, 1996, 423.

<sup>185</sup> Gruen, 2004, 233.

concept than an ancient one and does not derive from the point of view of Hellenistic Judaism and its self-conception.<sup>186</sup> It is improbable that Jewish in the Diaspora or in the homeland preferred either of these alternatives. Rather than that, a more balanced view is favourable. The view that Diaspora Jews eagerly awaited the promised return to the 'holy land' and understood their present condition as 'sojourning' in an 'alien land' needs to be revised.<sup>187</sup> That the Third Sibylline oracle is narrated from the point of view of a pagan prophetess adds to the problem. It is probable that the Sibyl intentionally omitted geographical and ethnographical references to the Jews and Judea and left her allusions open. Furthermore the omission of serves as an illustration: the generalisation of characters and places of the past to make them easier applicable to present circumstances and the experience of the people in the present. The Sibyl wants to address the people wherever they are.

Whereas Isaiah's daughter of Zion is the personified city of Jerusalem, the reference to the city is altogether obliterated by the Sibyl. The maiden of the Sibyl has completely dissolved into the realm of the imagined and abstract. The maiden has lost its function as perceived physical space, a place for people to live in completely.<sup>188</sup> Rather than that it purely exists in the realm of ideas and ideology. In Isa the 'real' and 'imagined' remains irreducibly tied to the specific physical space of the biblical city of Jerusalem. Apocalyptic literature, however, tends to loosens the spatial identification with specific locations.<sup>189</sup> The utopian space of apocalyptic inverts the "real" world and transcends it to the realm of the imagined and hope for a better life.

It was a common notion at that time that the temple and the city (and the land) 'tend to overlap, to be spatially fluid, and the terms applied to describe them oscillate between related meanings'<sup>190</sup>. In the case of the Sibyl, explicit references to the temple or the city are removed although they remain in the collective consciousness of her intended readers. The national aspect in the Sibyl's future world has faded from view. The Sibyl is of the opinion that all men are capable of accepting and keeping the law and are therefore free to choose to live according to it and enter the new reality. This new reality is a world free from war and strives, in which nature will no longer hold any obstacles for men and which is ruled by God.

---

<sup>186</sup> Gruen, 2004, 234.

<sup>187</sup> Contra Barclay, 1996, 423.

<sup>188</sup> It would also be possible to see the maiden as a reference to the people. In the Hebrew Bible God's relationship with Israel is sometimes described as that of a groom and his bride (Hos 2:21-22 cf. Rev. 19:17). A standard line has it that the lover and the beloved in the song of songs are God and his bride Israel (cf. t. Sanh. 2.10; b. Sanh. 101a).

<sup>189</sup> 'The interplay of real and imagined, as well as between spatiality and politics, [is a key element in Dan 7 and 1 En. 90 insofar as they reveal expectations] before and after the time of judgement' (Camp, 2008, 13). Although the Third Sibyl is not an Apocalypse.

<sup>190</sup> Lied, 2008, 36.



Whereas Isaiah's maiden or Zechariah's daughter Zion refer to the city of Jerusalem, the Sibyl's maiden is much more universalistic, it is the world at large, the world that the Sibyl travelled, that will be transformed by God at the end of days.

### 9.19 Pastoral peace and peace with the enemies (788-795)

788 ἡδὲ λύκοι τε καὶ ἄρνες ἐν οὐρεσιν ἄμμιγ' <sup>191</sup> ἔδονται  
 789 χόρτον, παρδάλιές τ' ἐρίφοις ἅμα βοσκήσονται·  
 790 ἄρκτοι σὺν μόσχοις νομάδες ἀνλισθήσονται·  
 791 σαρκοβόρος τε λέων φάγεται ἄχυρον παρὰ φάτνη  
 792 ὥς βοῦς· καὶ παῖδες μάλα νήπιοι ἐν δεσμοῖσιν  
 793 ἄξουσιν· πηρὸν γὰρ ἐπὶ χθονὶ θῆρα ποιήσει.  
 794 σὺν βρέφεσιν τε δράκοντες ἅμ' ἀσπίσι κοιμήσονται  
 795 οὐκ ἀδικήσουσιν· χεὶρ γὰρ θεοῦ ἔσσειτ' ἐπ' αὐτούς.

Wolfs and lambs will graze together in the mountains  
 leopards will feed together with kids.  
 Roaming bears will share their lair with calves,  
 the flesh-eating lion will eat husk at the manger  
 like an ox, and very young children will lead them  
 in bonds. For he will tame the wild beast of the earth.  
 snakes and asps will sleep together with babies  
 and will not harm them. For the hand of God will be upon them.

The remainder of the passage is very loosely modeled on Isa 11 and even shares some vocabulary.<sup>192</sup> Lightfoot describes it as '... a virtuoso rendition of all the Sibyl's techniques of allusion to scripture, quotation, allusion, paraphrase, and combination, as well as a text-book illustration of Sibylline style.'<sup>193</sup> Wolves and lambs will graze together (Isa 11:6), bears will share their lair with calves (11:6-7), lions will eat hay like oxen (Isa 11:7), children will lead lions, snakes and asps will sleep with babies and not harm them (Isa 11:8) because they will be protected being under the hand of God. In lines 798-9 it was said of the sons of God that they are protected by the hand of God.<sup>194</sup> Being safe in or under the hand of God is an image that can already be found in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>195</sup> The peace of the beasts also occurs in 2 Bar.<sup>196</sup> Like many paradisiacal images from the Hebrew Bible, the pacification of the animals recalls a garden of Eden as well as a Promised Land setting.<sup>197</sup> The motif is also found in

<sup>191</sup> From ἄμμιγ = in combination.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 235f for analysis. The Sibyl particularly draws from Isa 11 in her description of the wild animals that will become harmless. Lines 788-795 share much of the vocabulary with Isa 11:6-9. Cf. also Isa 60:17-25.

<sup>193</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 235. See outline there.

<sup>194</sup> See comments there.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Isa 25:10 (not in LXX due to anthropomorphism); Isa 66:14. The hand of God can also be means of destruction cf. Deut 2:15; 1 Sam 5:6.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. 2 Bar 73:6; T. Naph. 8:4; Sir 13:16.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Lev 26:6.

traditions of the Golden Age.<sup>198</sup> The motif of pastoral peace in the end-time often goes together with universal peace.<sup>199</sup> With regard to the Sibyl eternal peace was already mentioned in lines 780-784. It is no surprise then that she also accounts for the traditional motif of pastoral peace.

### 9.20 The joining of the horizontal and vertical lines

The vertical line is completed. Once all people acknowledge God's reign over heaven and earth, God will manifest his kingship on earth and 'dwell' among the people and the wild beasts of the earth will become harmless. This also mirrors the prediction about the opening of the gates of the blessed in line 770. If the gates of the blessed are the gates of heaven, a joining of the human and the divine sphere, i.e. the horizontal and vertical line, is implied. God's dwelling in the "maiden" also points to this conclusion. Not only will there be no more obstacles in the world, the realm of God and men will become one.

If the maiden is no longer a particular place such as Jerusalem/Israel but a universalistic one like the entire habitable world, the description of the divine dominion as the dawn of a peaceful era matches that of the end of war in line 807, which sums up the entire section (see below). The Sibyl has one world in mind in which the people have one common law and live together peacefully under the dominion of God. The heavenly world, the domain of God, will be joined with the human world. Whereas the first half of the book was concerned with the horizontal succession of human rule, the second half worked towards the manifestation of God's dominion on earth and what it would be like. This utopian world, in which God manifests his dominion, is constituted by a common law. At this point, the demarcation of space is nullified; the world is redefined as Utopia. Furthermore, it is made explicit that the entire earth is under the control and dominion of God.

### 9.21 The end of all things (796-808)

796 σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ' ἀριφραδές, ὥστε νοῆσαι,  
 797 ἡνίκα δὴ πάντων τὸ τέλος γαίῃφι<sup>200</sup> γένηται.  
 798 ὁππότε κεν ρομφαῖαι ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀστερόεντι  
 799 ἐννύχαι ὀφθῶσι πρὸς ἔσπερον ἡδὲ πρὸς ἥῳ,  
 800 αὐτίκα καὶ κονιορτὸς ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν προφέρηται

<sup>198</sup> Philo, Praem. 85-90; Virgil, Ecl. 4.18-25. See 'Introduction: Utopia' and The manifestation of God's dominion on earth' below.

<sup>199</sup> Already in Lev 26:6; Isa 11:10-16; cf. Philo's interpretation in Praem. 93-97. For classical Greek texts see Gatz, 1967, 229.

<sup>200</sup> Γαίῃφι is a poetic formation of γαῖα + φι, the adverbial ending or case suffix which performs functions of the instrumental ablative or locative case (Panayiotou, 1987, 63).

801 πρὸς γαῖαν ἅπαν, καὶ οἱ σέλας ἡελίοιο  
 802 ἐκλείψει κατὰ μέσσον ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἡδὲ σελήνης  
 803 ἀκτῖνες προφανοῦσι καὶ ἅψ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἵκονται·  
 804 αἷματι καὶ σταγόνεσσι πετρῶν δ' ἄπο σῆμα γένηται·  
 805 ἐν νεφέλῃ δ' ὄψεσθε μάχην πεζῶν τε καὶ ἱππέων  
 806 οἷα κυνηγεσίην θηρῶν, ὁμίχλησιν ὁμοίην.

I will tell you a very distinct sign, so that you will know  
 when the end of all things will come to pass on earth.  
 When swords appear in the starry sky  
 at night, toward west and toward east,  
 and straightaway a cloud of dust will be brought forth from heaven  
 over the entire earth and when all sunlight  
 is eclipsed in the middle of heaven and the rays  
 of the moon shine forth and come upon the earth;  
 blood and drops from the rocks will be as a sign,  
 you will see a battle of infantry and cavalry in the clouds  
 like a hunt for beasts, like mist.

The Sibyl switches back to the second person singular. However, this time there is no explicit addressee. The Sibyl announces that she will prophesy the things that will come to pass at the end of days. The end of all things is probably a reference to the judgement described in the preceding passages rather than to the end of the world.<sup>201</sup> The Sibyl then describes several signs that herald the end of judgement and the coming of the establishment of the divine dominion.<sup>202</sup>

The appearance of swords in the sky (798) as harbingers of things to come is another image taken from pagan oracles<sup>203</sup> and has already occurred in a similar fashion in lines 672-673. The swords will appear in the west and in the east. Here, the conclusion of the vertical (swords in the sky) and the horizontal line (east and west) is highlighted again. Some commentators translated 'evening and dawn' rather than 'west and east'<sup>204</sup>, however, this

<sup>201</sup> Contra Buitenwerf, 2003, 293.

<sup>202</sup> The enduringness of these motifs is visible in Mark 13 which picks up on several prophetic and apocalyptic images. The disciples ask Jesus when these things (ταῦτα) would come to pass (i.e. the destruction of the temple in v. 2), what the sign (σημεῖον) of the end will be (cf. Dan 12:7). Jesus replies that people will try and lead them astray (πλανήσῃ) (5-6), there will be cataclysmic warfare and kingdoms will rise against kingdoms (7-8 cf. Dan 11:44; Josephus, B.J. 2.187), there will be earthquakes and famine (cf. Gk. Apoc. Ezra 3:11-15; 4 Ezra 13:30f; Rev 6:1-17) this being the beginning of the messianic birth pangs (8; cf. Isa 26:17; 66:8; Jer 22:23; Hos 13.13; Mic 4:9f). The notion of messianic birth pangs can also be found in rabbinic literature (cf. y. Ber. 2.4). The abomination of desolation (cf. Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; 1 Macc 1:54, 59; 6:7) will be set up in the temple and the people of Judea will flee to the mountains (14). There will be great distress (θλίψις) the likes of which the world has not seen before (cf. Dan 12:1; Joel 2:2; Exod 9:18; Deut 4:32). In the remainder of the passage, Jesus speaks of cosmological signs to underline the majesty of the son of man. The sun and moon will be eclipsed (cf. Isa 13:10; 34:4; Joel 2:10; 3:4; 4:15f) and the son of man will come in the clouds (24-27 cf. Dan 7:13) to gather his elect from the ends of the earth. Mark, like the Sibyl, copies from traditional apocalyptic material, particularly from Daniel (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:1).

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Berger, 1981, 1428-1469. Cf. Augustin, Civ. 3.31 (*cum pluit terra*); Virgil, Aen. 12.167; Ovid, Metam. 15.783.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Kurfes, 1951, 109; Gauger, 1998, 109; Collins, 1984a, 379.

interpretation seems unlikely. Rather than a temporal aspect, the Sibyl is highlighting a spatial aspect. The appearance of signs in the west and in the east is visible to the entire earth as she knew it, which was aligned to east and west rather than north and south. The entire world is envisaged. However, we have also observed that east and west signify more than just their alignment on the horizontal line.

A dust-cloud (κονιοπτώς) will come from heaven (οὐρανόθεν). In the LXX this is often a harbinger of judgement and occurs in conjunction with a theophany.<sup>205</sup> Buitenwerf and Gauger point to Deut 28:24, as the influence of Deut 28 can also be observed in 520-544. Merkel points to a prophecy preserved by Tacitus (Hist. 5.13)<sup>206</sup> which speaks of several celestial phenomena that announce the return of rule to the East and the coming of a king from Judea. Indeed, the entire passage evokes traditional motifs, namely signs of the final judgement so that an allusion to Deut 28 seems to be a reasonable assumption.

Further signs will be a solar eclipse from heaven (ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ) and the shining of the moon upon the earth (ἐπὶ γαῖαν) in middle of the day (κατὰ μέσος). These signs are traditional features drawn from the Hebrew Bible.<sup>207</sup> That these phenomena occur in the sky is obvious. However, the real point of emphasis is the divine origin of these events. The cosmological signs underline God's majesty and sovereignty. Similar phenomena can be found in the Bible and related literature.<sup>208</sup>

Particularly in light of line 805 which describes a battle in the clouds the prodigy preserved by Tacitus springs to mind. The appearance of armies in the sky is also mentioned as a portent in 2 Macc 5:1-4 and Josephus.<sup>209</sup> The word group πεζῶν καὶ ἱππέων is of Homeric origin.<sup>210</sup>

## 9.22 The end of war at the hands of God who dwells in heaven

807 τοῦτο τέλος πολέμοιο τελεῖ θεὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν.

This is the end of war that God who dwells in heaven will fulfil.

The passage concludes with the statement that this is the end of war (τέλος πολέμοιο) which God dwelling in heaven will execute. The statement brings the oracle full circle with

<sup>205</sup> Exod 9:9; Deut 9:21; Job 21:18; Nah 1:3; Isa 3:24; 5:24; 29:5; Ezek 26:10; Dan 2:35.

<sup>206</sup> visae per caelum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma et subito nubium igne conlucere templum. apertae repente delubri fores et audita maior humana vox excedere deos; simul ingens motus excedentium. quae pauci in metum trahebant: pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens profectique Iudaea rerum potirentur.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. Isa 13:10; 34:4; Ezek 32:7; Joel 3:4 (LXX); As. Mos. 10:5; Mark 13:24; Matt 24:29; Luke 21:25; Acts 2:20; Rev 6:12.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. As. Mos. 10:5; Acts 2:20; Rev 6:12; Isa 13:10; 24:23; 34:4; Joel 4:15; Ezek 32:7; Matt 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25.

<sup>209</sup> B.J. 6.297-298.

<sup>210</sup> Homer, Od. 14.267; 17.436.

lines 154-155 which describe the Titan War as the beginning of war (ἀρχὴ πολέμου) for all mortals. In line 204-205 it is furthermore explicitly stated that there was no pause to war (ἄμπαυσις πολέμοιο) after the Titan line had ended.<sup>211</sup> Line 807 concludes the subject of war. It was first started by the hubristic human kings, i.e. the Titans and Greeks and was continued by their descendants and other peoples alike. At the end of days, however, God will put a permanent end to war. War will only come to this permanent end after a period of weal and woe in which kings sent as instruments of God are able to achieve a temporary cessation of war (παύσει πολέμοιο).<sup>212</sup> The Sibyl's timeline consists of beginning (ἀρχή) of war, no pause (ἄμπαυσις)<sup>213</sup> of war, eventual pause of war at the hands of a king from the East (παύσει)<sup>214</sup>, ultimate end (τέλος) of war at the hands of God.<sup>215</sup> The theological argument is obvious: war was started by human kings, the ones whom the Greeks venerate as Gods, and was carried on for centuries until God would intervene and finally put an end to all war by manifesting his dominion on earth.

Line 807 is the first and only time in the book that the Sibyl explicitly states that God dwells in heaven (θεὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν) although it was implied throughout the book. This notion that God dwells in heaven and unfolds events from there is especially prominent in this section as though the Sibyl particularly wanted to highlight the divine nature of the final days. In line 787 it was said that God would dwell (οικήσει) in the maiden. The same word, namely οἰκέω, is used in both instances. In light of line 807 the prominence of line 787 comes especially to the fore. The idea that God will dwell among the people to manifest his dominion on earth at the end of days is the central eschatological outlook of the Third Sibyl.

808 ἀλλὰ χρὴ πάντα θύειν μεγάλῳ βασιλῇ.  
But all must sacrifice to the Great King.

A further conclusive line states that all must sacrifice to God. This mirrors the statement of the penitent nations that they would send to the temple in line 718 and is also a traditional image.<sup>216</sup> It also shows that the temple and its cult are symbols of God's sovereignty.

### 9.23 Conclusion: the manifestation of God's dominion on earth

With the manifestation of God's dominion on earth the horizontal and the vertical line are conjoined and completed. On the horizontal line world history and all war come to an end.

<sup>211</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 295.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. lines 318, 653.

<sup>213</sup> Sib. Or. 3.205.

<sup>214</sup> Sib. Or. 3.652.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Isa 2:4; Ps 46:10; 76:4; Zech 9:10.

<sup>216</sup> Isa 2:1-5 // Mi 4:1-5; Isa 26:1-6; Hag 2:7; Tob 13:13; (Matt 8:11).

The Sibyl perceives war as having been brought about by the hubris of men, not by God. Sovereign control and dominion are limited to God. On the vertical line the warmongers and idolaters will be punished and will not partake in the peaceful utopian world whereas the penitent nations will be part of the ideal utopian world (702-731). The horizontal demarcation of space is nullified. At the end of days, the world will be transformed physically and ethically: it will be filled with abundant fertility and there will be no more obstacles that used to make travelling difficult (779). The earth will be void of war, famine and draught. The entire earth will be peaceful (755, 780). Even wealth will be distributed righteously. There will be a common law for all people (757). Yet there is no mythical transformation of the temple as we know it from other texts. The temple will be the same historical temple. Since the text stems from before 70 CE the divine restoration of the temple is not presupposed. The Herodian Temple provides the historic backdrop for the temple in the Third Sibyl.

The manifold oracles of doom against various places are embedded in a broad historical framework which reaches back to the building of the tower of Babel and is greatly concerned with the succession of world kingdoms looking forward to the judgement of the wicked and the transformation of the earth into an idyllic utopian state. It seems as though the author transformed the Sibylline Oracles taken from Greco-Roman tradition into a new, religious interpretation of history as a whole. With the beginning of the book lost, it is impossible to determine what events were described prior to the Tower of Babel narrative. It is, however, likely that there was a description of creation and of the Ark narrative of which only a fragment remains intact.<sup>217</sup> In summary, world history is dominated by the failure of men. Men are lead astray by idolatry and their hubristic claims to world dominion. Only the sons of God are the ones who possess the law of God (252-258). However, they too were led astray which brought about the destruction of the first temple (265-191). The people of God are therefore admonished to heed the law of God to be moral guides for all mankind (194-195). Only those who adhere to it and accept the sovereignty of God, the people of God and the nations alike, will live to see the paradisiacal transformation of the earth. Then all strife and war will cease. The book begins with the beginning of war which was first brought about by the ancestors of the Greeks, the Titans who fought over who should dominate the earth. Struggle continued on through the ages until the rise of Rome, the last and most terrible of all empires. The Sibyl heralds that God will intervene, destroy the Romans and all the wicked and establish his dominion in the human world by transforming the earth into a peaceful and

---

<sup>217</sup> Buitenwerf (2003, 137-178) has argued that fragments I, II, and III could have been part of the original beginning of the book. However, this remains a matter of debate and shall not concern us here.

righteous place in which only those obedient to his law, the people of God and nations alike, will partake. This universalistic approach anchors the Sibyl in a Diaspora setting.

Through the transformation of the earth the dominion of God is established on earth and thereby realised in and transformed into space. The transformed world, the manifestation of God's dominion on earth, is the *basilèion*. The *basilèion* is not just a kingdom, it's not just God's dominion. It is the ideal utopian world that God will bring about. Prior to God's final intervention the earth was a hostile place and its dominion was struggled over by the kingdoms of the earth. The transformed earth, however, is the manifestation of his dominion. The transformed world is an ideal one void of dangers and obstacles. The horizontal demarcation of space will be nullified. This can only be achieved by God, not by mortal men. Hence the Sibyl condemns all human endeavors for world dominion for they only bring about war and destruction. In the end the world becomes the 'space of God's constant and everlasting presence'<sup>218</sup>. The divine kingdom will make the question for the land obsolete because there will be no more boundaries. The entire earth will be under God's uncontested dominion.

---

<sup>218</sup> Lied, 2008, 308.

## 10 Epilogue: The wandering prophetess (Lines 809-829)

### *From Babylon to Greece: the origin and place of the Sibyl*

#### 10.1 Introduction

The final section of the book is introduced by the aetiology of the Sibyl. She narrates that, after leaving the distant walls of Babylon, she prophesied against Hellas and unto all mortals (809-812). In Greece she will be called a stranger (813) and be identified as the Sibyl of Erythrea (814). The subject of wandering is an important aspect with regard to the structure of the texts. The Sibyl's travels suggest that she visited the places which she prophesied against. This notion sheds light on the genesis of the text as we now have it. The text as it presents itself is a collection of oracles gathered throughout the world. In that sense, the Third Sibyl can be understood as a travel log.

The Sibyls introduce themselves at the beginning and at the end of their oracles, which is likely to be true for the pagan Sibyl as well.<sup>1</sup> The Sibyl claims to be the daughter-in-law of Noah and that accordingly she has lived since the deluge. Therefore, the Third Sibyl made her prophecies some time after the flood. "Sie ist so keine eigentliche 'Heidin', sondern partizipiert an der 'Uroffenbarung' der biblischen Frühgeschichte"<sup>2</sup>.

#### 10.2 The Sibyl as a prophetess (809-812)

809 ταῦτά σοι Ἀσσυρίης Βαβυλώνια τείχεα μακρά  
 810 οἰστρομανῆς προλιποῦσα, ἐς Ἑλλάδα πεμπόμενον πῦρ  
 811 πᾶσι προφητεύουσα θεοῦ μηνίματα θνητοῖς . . .  
 812 ὥστε προφητεῦσαί με βροτοῖς αἰνίγματα θεῖα.

These things (I prophesy) to you after I left the long Babylonian walls  
 of Assyria in a frenzy, I sent a fire to Greece,  
 I prophesy the cause of wrath of God to all mortals  
 so that I prophesy divine riddles unto mortals.

Lines 811 and 812 highlight once more that the Sibyl regards herself as a prophetess. It is evident throughout the Sibylline corpus that the Sibyl prefers to call herself a *προφῆτις* and her activity *προφητεύειν* over the terms commonly attributed to the pagan Sibyls.<sup>3</sup> *Προφῆτις* is often associated with the Pythia who shares a few similarities with the Sibyl.<sup>4</sup> On the other

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 14f. Cf. Sib. Or. 4.22.

<sup>2</sup> Hengel, 1973, 288f.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, Phaedr. 244b renders the Sibyl's activity as *χράω* (to proclaim) in contrast to the *προφῆτις* at Delphi.

<sup>4</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 21 cf. 8.



hand, προφήτης is also the LXX rendering of the Hebrew נביא which puts the Sibyl in a line of prophets who spoke on the behalf of the Jewish people. The designation of God as ἡγήτωρ ὕμνων in line 306 refers to God as the originator and the Sibyl as the medium of the oracles. Compare line 295 where the Sibyl says that she stopped uttering the ὕμνος. Ὑμνος should hence be translated as oracle rather than hymn.

The biblical canon was compiled under the premise that the age of prophecy had ended. Accordingly from 1 Macc 9:27 we learn that after the death of Judah (160 BCE) no such affliction as the defilement of the temple had occurred since the time that a prophet was last seen. 1 Macc 1:46 and 14:41 eagerly await the return of the prophets which is probably related to the reestablishment of Jewish autonomy under the Hasmoneans.<sup>5</sup> 2 Bar 85:3 attests for the end of prophecy which does not mean, however, that there were no more oracles or other charismatic figures such as Baruch himself.<sup>6</sup> According to t. Sotah 13:2 Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were the last prophets.<sup>7</sup> Josephus lists thirteen prophetic books and claims that from the Persian era onwards there were no more prophets.<sup>8</sup>

The reason for the cessation of prophecy is twofold: on the one hand there was enough material by the Hellenistic age to apply to any situation necessary. On the other, Judeans either in the homeland or in the Diaspora found themselves under foreign rule so that prophetic critique of rulers was no longer possible. Prophecy in the traditional sense could only be revived once the political balance shifted. Apocalypticism offered a new approach to the problem via the coming of God.<sup>9</sup> The Qumran texts expect an eschatological prophet in light of Deut 18:15-18.<sup>10</sup>

In wisdom literature, wisdom would assume the place of prophecy.<sup>11</sup>

Even though it was mostly agreed that the age of prophecy had ended, Josephus attests for several (false) prophets during the Jewish War<sup>12</sup> and he claims to be a prophet himself having foretold to Vespasian that he would be emperor<sup>13</sup>. The image of prophecy in Hellenistic Judaism was certainly defined by the traditions from the Hebrew Bible.<sup>14</sup> However, there is also a shift towards a Hellenistic interpretation. According to Josephus John Hyrcan was not only king and high priest but also a prophet.<sup>15</sup>

Pseudepigraphy, on the other hand, offered the ways and means of continuing prophecy long after it had officially ceased.

### 10.3 The Erythraean Sibyl (813-814a)

813 καὶ καλέσουσι βροτοὶ με καθ' Ἑλλάδα πατρίδος ἄλλης,  
814a ἐξ Ἐρυθρῆς γεγαυῖαν ἀναιδέα.

Throughout Greece mortals will say that I am from another fatherland  
a shameless one, born in Erythrae...

<sup>5</sup> Hahn/Klein, 2011, 25.

<sup>6</sup> Hahn/Klein, 2011, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. b. B. Bat. 14b.

<sup>8</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 1.8.

<sup>9</sup> Hahn/Klein, 2011, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Hahn/Klein, 2011, 40; Cf. 1QS IX, 11.

<sup>11</sup> Hahn/Klein, 2011, 24; cf. Wis 7:27; Sir 24:33.

<sup>12</sup> Josephus, Ant 13.311ff; 15.373ff; 17.41-45; 20.5.1; B.J. 2,159; 6.281-8, 300-9.

<sup>13</sup> Josephus, Vita 208-210.

<sup>14</sup> Hahn/Klein, 2011, 33.

<sup>15</sup> Josephus, Ant. 13.299f cf. also T. Levi 8:11; 18:1-14.

The Sibyl also states that the Greeks, the alleged addressees of the book, identify her as the Erythraean Sibyl which implies that this identification is ‘not necessarily the right one’<sup>16</sup>. Based on the Sibyl's claim, and due to Christian writers' habits of relating the Third Sibyl to one of the better known pagan locations of Sibyls, Lactantius identifies her with the Erythraean Sibyl.<sup>17</sup> She also claims that she first came from Assyria Babylon from where she came to Greece to convert the Greeks. Her current location in Erythrae (Asia Minor) lets her imitate the style of the Sibyl native to the area - hence her geographical knowledge of the Asian peninsula - while her Babylonian origin connects her to the early history of the Jews and that of mankind as a whole. From later sources we can infer that the birthplace of the Sibyl and the place where she later lived were widely debated issues.<sup>18</sup> If we do locate her in Erythrae (Asia Minor), it is not so much of a surprise that many of her oracles are concerned with the area. The Erythraean Sibyl was by far the most famous Greek Sibyl.<sup>19</sup> In an inscription uncovered in Erythrae the Sibyl assures the reader that Erythrae is her native country.<sup>20</sup> In Erythrae the Sibyl's grotto was built (or renovated) on the occasion of a visit by Lucius Verus in 162 CE. On a gate-post was an epigram which claims to have been given to the city by the Sibyl herself. Buitenwerf notes that the wording πατρίς δ' οὐκ ἄλλη on the inscription in question resembles that of line 813b (πατρίδος ἄλλης).<sup>21</sup> Various towns and cities in Greece and Asia Minor claimed to be the Sibyl's original birthplace or the place where she lived. In Pausanias' Description of Greece a passage is devoted to the Sibyl.<sup>22</sup> Pausanias wrote in the time of the empire when local communities might seize upon a famous literary figure for prestige. He speaks of the Sibyl as a tourist attraction in Cumae.<sup>23</sup> According to Pausanias, the towns of Marpeessos, Alexandria in Troad and Erythrae had a dispute about which one of them was home to the Sibyl.<sup>24</sup> Pausanias describes her tomb in Alexandria Troas as being besides images of the nymphs and Hermes<sup>25</sup> whereas the grotto in Erythrae contained an image of the Sibyl and of her mother Nais. In the same passage, Pausanias states that the Sibyl prophesied in frenzy and possessed by (the) god (μαινομένη τε

<sup>16</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 85.

<sup>17</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 85; cf. Lactantius, Inst. 1.6.13.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 298 and 92ff. For discussion see Lightfoot, 2007, 85ff; Buitenwerf, 2003, 5-125 et al.

<sup>19</sup> Jacoby on FGH 422. Cf. Plato, Phaedr. 244b; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ant. Rom. 4.62.6 and Lactantius, Inst. 1.6.11, 14 on the Roman delegation to Erythrae.

<sup>20</sup> Buresch, 1892; Salomon Reinach, “Deux Inscriptions de l'Asie-Mineure,” *REG* 4 (1891): 280.

Online at <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main>.

<sup>21</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 298.

<sup>22</sup> Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.

<sup>23</sup> Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.8; Cf. Ps.-Justin, Cohort ad. Graec. 35 A-36 B.

<sup>24</sup> Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.1-4.

<sup>25</sup> Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.6.

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ κάτοχος πεποίηκεν). He then quotes an oracle reading πατρίς δέ μοί ἐστιν ἐρυθρή Μάρπησος (my fatherland is red Marpessos), ἐρυθρή - whose literally meaning is red - is reminiscent of the city's name.

The inscription in Erythrae relates that the Sibyl travelled the entire earth (πᾶσαν ἐπὶ χθὸν ἔβην)<sup>26</sup> and that she is ancient (πρεσβυγενής)<sup>27</sup> and lived as a virgin (παρθένος)<sup>28</sup> throughout her life. Furthermore, a mortal man by the name of Theodoros is said to be her father (verse 4). The notion that the Sibyl travelled the world before finding her place is a feature that the inscription and the Third Sibyl have in common. However, the wandering Sibyl was a common motif in the Roman era (see below).

The inscription found in Erythraea dates back to 162 CE and concerns the Sibyl of Apollo.<sup>29</sup> The author of the Third Sibyl presupposes the existence and fame of the Erythraean Sibyl introducing herself in the inscription. The Sibyl of Apollo introduces herself as νύμφης Ναϊάδος, a nymph of Naiad, i.e. a river nymph. The Third Sibyl refers to herself as a νύμφη of Noah. The term νύμφη conveys a certain irony as it commonly designates a young woman, the Sibyl, however, is ancient (πρεσβυγενής)<sup>30</sup>.

There is, of course, no way of knowing whether the author knew the inscription in question, it is however, obvious that he knew the Erythraean Sibyl in whose mouth he puts the oracles.

#### 10.4 The wandering Sibyl

The location of the Sibyl is a feature that only book 3 and 11 of the Sibylline Oracles share.<sup>31</sup> 'Evidently the author wanted to exploit the associations of this famous Sibyl, but without committing himself to the position that the oracle was genuinely her prophecy'<sup>32</sup>. It is obvious why he chose the Erythraean Sibyl. Early traditions tell us that she was ancient and associated with traditions of wandering and ex eventu prophecies and the tradition that she prophesied the Trojan War.<sup>33</sup> Hence, the prediction about the Trojan War in the Third Sibyl (419-432) is commonly believed to derive from the original Erythraean Sibyl. Lightfoot

<sup>26</sup> Verse 10.

<sup>27</sup> Verse 2.

<sup>28</sup> Verse 10.

<sup>29</sup> In Pausanias' account it is the Delphic Sibyl that is associated with Apollo. According to Pausanias, the Sibyl also occasionally referred to herself as Herophile or Artemis, the wife of Apollo and that sometimes she appears as his sister and sometimes as his daughter (Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.2). Apparently, the identification of the Sibyls were already manifold and confusing in antiquity.

<sup>30</sup> Buresch, 1892.

<sup>31</sup> 11.315 (Python → Delphi cf. 4.4f; Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.6).

<sup>32</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.1-2. Cf. Apollodorus of Erythrae, FGH 422; Cf. Callisthenes, FGH 124 F 14; Fenestella ap. Lactantius, Inst. 1.6.14; Varro ap. Lactantius, Inst. 1.6.9.

suggested that the traditions of the Sibyl's wandering perhaps is a Greek invention 'to place them in an imagined Orient',<sup>34</sup> as there is no evidence for an oriental Sibyl before the Roman era. The Sibyl's wanderings were ultimately modelled on those of Homer.<sup>35</sup> Since the tradition of the wandering Sibyl was already established by the time the third book was compiled, the compiler drew on that image. Therefore, the Sibyl is able to prophecy against various nations and places of the earth. The Sibyl herself cannot be fixed to a specific place, nor does she want to. Neither can the compiler of the third book be tied a specific place in the Diaspora.

The Sibyl's image as a wandering prophetess connects her with the horizontal and the vertical line. As a prophetess she has a function on the vertical line to begin with. As a traveller she is also allocated on the horizontal line. On both lines she is able to prophesy against the entire earth.

### 10.5 The disbelieved prophetess (814b-818)

814b ... οἱ δέ με Κίρκης  
 815 μητρὸς καὶ Γνωστοῖο πατρὸς φήσουσι Σίβυλλαν  
 816 μαινομένην ψεύστειραν· ἐπὶν δὲ γένηται ἅπαντα,  
 817 τήνικα μου μνήμην ποιήσετε κούκέτι μ' οὐδεὶς  
 818 μαινομένην φήσειε, θεοῦ μέγαλοιο προφῆτιν.

Others will call me  
 raging, lying Sybil, whose mother is Circe  
 and whose father is Gnostos (unknown).  
 But when all these things come to pass,  
 then you will remember me, nobody will call me furious anymore,  
 for I am a prophetess of the great God.

The Sibyl foretells that not everyone will listen to her and that some will even call her an impostor. Buitenwerf notes that Greek and Roman intellectuals were critical of Sibylline prophecy and that such objections are reflected here.<sup>36</sup> The disbelief of her addressees is a recurring theme in the Sibylline Oracles.<sup>37</sup> It is also a common motif with regard to Cassandra.<sup>38</sup> The Sibyl's frenzy is likewise a commonplace.<sup>39</sup> The Third Sibyl uses the verb *μαίνομαι* whereas classical sources since Plato utilise the noun *μανία* (frenzy, mania).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Jacoby on FGH 422.

<sup>36</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 297. Cf. Cicero, Div. 2.54.112.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 1.5; 2.346; 3.295, 489; cf. 11.320-321; Phlegon, FGH 257 F 37 (V).

<sup>38</sup> Aeschylus, Ag. 1240-1.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.810; Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.3; Phlegon, FGH 257 F 37 (V) 11.2-3, 5; Virgil, Aen. 3.443; Cicero, Div. 1.4, 2.110.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Hesiod, fr. 327 M.-W.; Plato, Phaedr. 244 A-B; Lucian, Jupp. trag. 30; Plutarch, Mor. 404 E, 438 B; Origin, Cels. 7.3; Chrysostom, Hom. 1 Cor 29, PG 61.242. Also Pausanias, Descr. 10.12.3; Phlegon, FGH 257 F 37 (V) II. 2-3, 5; Virgil, Aen. 3.443; Cicero, Div. 1.4, 2.110.

Frenzy is another motif that the Sibyl has in common with Cassandra.<sup>41</sup> The Sibyl's madness reflects not only the pagan literary image of the ravaging prophetess but also the image of biblical prophecy and its reception in Hellenistic Judaism where unusual states of mind and physical states increasingly came to be attributed to seers and prophets.<sup>42</sup> In the NT divinely inspired glossolalia appears to be madness to those who do not understand the gift.<sup>43</sup> However, from a Judeo-Christian standpoint it was the false and the pagan prophets that were out of their minds.<sup>44</sup> The Third Sibyl claims to be accused of madness by the Greeks. The meaning of *μαίνομαι* is a twofold one; on the one hand, the Greeks - her alleged addresses - call her a crazy liar whereas the people of God recognise her as a true prophet and her mania is but divine inspiration. Lightfoot attributes the Sibyl's madness to her 'repertoire of transformed pagan topoi'.<sup>45</sup>

### 10.6 A relative of Noah (819-828)

819 οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ δῆλωσεν, ἃ πρὶν γενετῆρσιν ἐμοῖσιν·  
 820 ὅσσα δὲ πρῶτ' ἐγένοντο, τὰ μοι γενήτης<sup>46</sup> κατέλεξε,  
 821 τῶν μετέπειτα δὲ πάντα θεὸς νόῳ ἐγκατέθηκεν,  
 822 ὥστε προφητεύειν με τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα  
 823 καὶ λέξαι θνητοῖς. ὅτε γὰρ κατεκλύζετο κόσμος  
 824 ὕδασι, καὶ τις ἀνὴρ μόνος εὐδοκίμητος ἐλείφθη  
 825 ὑλοτόμῳ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ ἐπιπλώσας ὑδάτεσσιν  
 826 σὺν θηρσὶν πτηνοῖσί θ', ἵν' ἐμπλησθῇ πάλι κόσμος·  
 827 τοῦ μὲν ἐγὼ νύμφη καὶ ἀφ' αἵματος αὐτοῦ ἐτύχθην,  
 828 τῷ τὰ πρῶτ' ἐγένοντο· τὰ δ' ἔσχατα πάντ' ἀπεδείχθη·

For he did not reveal to me the things that had happened previously to my parents.  
 My father passed on to me all the things that happened first  
 and God put in my mind all these things that would happen afterwards,  
 so that I prophesy the things that will be and the things that have come to pass  
 and tell them to the mortals. For when the world was deluged  
 with waters, and one certain glorious man survived  
 sailing the waters in a wooden house  
 together with beasts and birds, so that the world would be filled again,  
 I am his daughter-in-law and from his blood  
 the first things happened to him, the last things have all been revealed,

The sentences in 823b-828 are elliptic without a main clause following.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1214-16, 1256-7; Virgil, *Aen.* 6.77-80.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Isa 21:3-4; Jer 4:19; Hab 3:16; Job 4:12-16; Dan 7:15, 28; 8:17-18, 27; 10:8-11, 15-17; 2 Esd 6:29-30, 35-7; Pseudo-Philo, *L.A.B.* 28.6.

<sup>43</sup> 1 Cor 14:23: Εἰς οὖν συνέλθῃ ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ πάντες λαλῶσιν γλώσσαις, εἰσέλθωσιν δὲ ἰδιῶται ἢ ἄπιστοι, οὐκ ἐροῦσιν ὅτι μαίνεσθε;

<sup>44</sup> Jer 36:26; Wis 14:28; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.2-3; Origin, *Cels.* 7.4.

<sup>45</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 19.

<sup>46</sup> Conjecture by Geffcken (Wilamowitz).

By saying that she is a relative of Noah she underlines her old age. The Sibyl's relation to Noah anchors her in a time long before prophecy was believed to have ended. Although Noah is not mentioned by name, the Sibyl is unmistakably referring to him as is evident from the references to the flood and the ark in lines 823b-828. Hence she is a true prophet because she made her prophecies during or shortly after the deluge and they all turned out to be true. The Sibyl tells the reader that Noah has told her everything that had happened before her time, i.e. early history - that is (presumably) creation and the flood from the now lost beginning of the book, the tower of Babel and the Titanomachy. God, on the other hand, has revealed the future to her himself so that she may prophesy the things that will be (819-821). The Sibyl has stressed this several times, most notably in the introduction formulas to each section.

As a true prophet the Sibyl can foretell world history from the flood onwards. Since Noah personally told her about the times before the flood, her knowledge of that time must be as exact as that of the future events she is predicting. This confirms the observation made in the beginning of the book: the events of early history are related in the past tense whereas the events after the downfall of the Titans are related in the future tense.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, the Sibyl's relation to Noah puts her in direct connection to a figure who himself is not Jewish but lived long before such distinctions were made. By relating the Sibyl to Noah and his time the author sidesteps the problem of pagan character by making her a character of Jewish world history, i.e. history as told by the Hebrew Bible. Since the Sibyl lived long before the covenant the fact that she is not Jewish becomes irrelevant.

The Sibyl's connection with Noah is presupposed in books 1 and 2 of the oracles. The First Sibylline Oracle in particular draws on the conception of the Sibyl as a prophetess 'with universal insight into history from the creation to the eschaton'<sup>49</sup> (cf. Sib. Or. 1.1-4). The Ark narrative in books 1 and 2 is connected to Asia Minor as it landed on a mountain near Apamea. Book 1 and 2 are known to have originated in Asia Minor. Sib. Or. 1.287-290 elaborate on the family ties between Noah and the Sibyl, there she is his daughter in law. The passage is probably an exposition of Sib. Or. 3.827. Waßmuth has recently argued the contrary, namely that at least the part concerning Noah in the epilogue in lines 809-829 is a secondary addition that presupposes books 1 and 2.<sup>50</sup> However, that the Third Sibyl does not mention Noah's name seems to indicate that the connection is original.

---

<sup>47</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 299.

<sup>48</sup> See Introduction: Structure of the Third Sibylline Oracle.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 380.

<sup>50</sup> Waßmuth, 2011, 29. The part on Erythrea and Babylonia can already be found in Lactantius (Inst. 1.6.13). However, Waßmuth finds it noteworthy that he omits the connection to Noah and concludes that this is a later addition influenced by books 1 and 2.

Lightfoot notes that this kind of identification is quite unlike the style of biblical prophecy.<sup>51</sup> Biblical prophets are identified in the beginning of their books or not at all.<sup>52</sup> However, she identifies certain similarities with identification of Sirach<sup>53</sup> which shares three sorts of information we find in the Sibyl: a) autobiography; b) the content of the work; c) the nature of the author's inspiration. Lightfoot notes that she is barely suggesting that both are using a very similar evolution of sign-off formula whose content 'is already implied in the prologue to Hesiod's theogony'<sup>54</sup>. That the Sibyl has a lot in common with wisdom literature has already been observed.<sup>55</sup> However, since the beginning of the book is lost, it cannot be determined whether there has been an introduction formula or not.

The author draws on two traditions and combines them:

1. The Sibyl is local to Erythrea,
2. The association of Noah and the ark with Asia Minor.

The latter has long been observed by scholars and is evident from five coins minted in Apamea from the end of the second century CE bearing the scene of Noah and the Ark.

#### **Excursus: The association of Noah's ark with Asia Minor**

The Noah coins from Apamea are unique in their display of a biblical scene.<sup>56</sup> The fact that it is indeed Noah who is depicted on those coins is evident from the inscription ΝΩΕ on the side of the ark. There were, in fact, numerous flood legends in the ancient world and in Asia Minor in particular.<sup>57</sup> Around 19 CE, the epithet ἡ κιβωτός (box, chest or ark)<sup>58</sup> is first recorded as a name for Apamea by Strabo.<sup>59</sup> According to some scholars this led the local Jews to associate one of the nearby mountains with the landing place of the ark, however, it is more probable that the city received its nickname for other reasons and that the Jews later connected it with the 'kibotos' they read about in the LXX thus giving it an ancient significance.<sup>60</sup> As we have observed with regard to the birthplace of Homer or the Erythraean Sibyl, ancient cities were eager for aetiologies that gave them an ancient foundation. Sib. Or. 1 and 2 reflect the tradition that the site of the ark's landing was the hill of Celaenae behind the city. From a geographical perspective, Celaenae does not seem to be the obvious choice as it is by no means the highest mountain in the area. Trebilco notes that the hill was already associated with local legends (Philemon and Baucis) and that therefore the Jewish community did not change the original site.<sup>61</sup> The naming of the figure and the display of Noah and his wife, who does not occur in the biblical narrative, suggest that they suppressed local figures, probably Philemon and Baucis.<sup>62</sup> If this development indeed presupposes the LXX, the tradition cannot have developed earlier than 150 BCE. However, the coins may as well account for Christian rather than Jewish influence and

<sup>51</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 52.

<sup>52</sup> Superscriptions of prophetic books are usually secondary.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Sir 50:27.

<sup>54</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 53.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. comments on lines 767ff.

<sup>56</sup> Trebilco, 1991, 86.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Trebilco, 1991, 88-91.

<sup>58</sup> Note that the same term is used for Noah's ark in the LXX.

<sup>59</sup> Strabo, Geogr. 12.8.13.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Trebilco, 1991, 91-93.

<sup>61</sup> Trebilco, 1991, 92.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Trebilco, 1991, 94.

so do Sib. Or. 1 and 2.<sup>63</sup> In Sib. Or. 1.261-7, which probably originated in Apamea, it is said that Phrygia is the first land to have emerged after the flood. There, the mountain on which the ark landed is identified as Ararat which lies behind Apamea. In book 1, a large part is devoted to the flood narrative, namely lines 125-282. Book 1 and 2 of the Sibylline Oracles presuppose book 3.

In Sib. Or. 3.339ff many cities in Asia and Europe will be destroyed due to a flood. It may be that these lines contain reminiscence to a possible Black Sea deluge that is rumoured among scholars to have occurred approximately in 5600 BCE.<sup>64</sup> Deluge myths were often associated with Asia Minor and so was the narrative about Noah and the ark. Be that as it may, the image given is that of large scale destruction, due to a possible flood. Deluge myths were widespread in the ancient world and some of them are associated with Phrygia. It is probably that Jews who arrived in Apamea around 205 BCE already found a flood tradition associated with the area. This circumstance influenced the Noah traditions in books 1 and 2 of the Sibylline Oracles. It is therefore possible that the Third Sibyl too contains a memory of such a flood and uses it to her own ends.<sup>65</sup>

The Sibyl's old age predates the oracles of the Greeks and the prophecies of the Jewish prophets. Bloch has recently introduced the term *Anciennität*<sup>66</sup> for this phenomenon, a feature that the Sibyl shares with many Pseudepigraphs.<sup>67</sup> *Anciennität* is claiming the antiquity and truth of Judaism by guising the narrator in the cloak of an ancient prophetic, usually but not necessarily Jewish figure that is subsequently fictionally interwoven with world history or important non-Jewish figures. Thus Orpheus becomes the teacher of Musaeus (Moses)<sup>68</sup> and the Sibyl becomes the daughter-in-law of Noah. In that respect, as well as in many others such as the usage of Hexameters and Homeric language, the Sibyl has her closest parallel in Pseudo-Orpheus.

### 10.7 Conclusion of the Sibyl (829)

829 ὥστ' ἀπ' ἐμοῦ στόματος τάδ' ἀληθινὰ πάντα λελέχθω.  
so let all these things from my mouth be accounted true.

The final verse of the Third Sibyl sums up the prophetic claims of the Sibyl; the predictions made by the Sibyl will all come true and should therefore be taken seriously. Since her prophecies are all ex eventu they did of course come true. The insistence on the truth of her prophecies not only recalls pagan traditions surrounding the Sibyl but also legitimises her as a prophet for Judaism. In light of Deuteronomy the Sibyl is a true prophet because her prophecies came true.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 102ff.

<sup>64</sup> For further reading on the subject matter: Valentina Yanko-Hombach, ed., *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. comments on line 809ff.

<sup>66</sup> Bloch, 2009. Cf. Artap. 3.4.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Aristob. 5.5 who claims that Hesiod and Homer copied from the works of the Jews.

<sup>68</sup> Ps.-Orph. 2-3 (Urfassung)/3-4 (rec. A); 18, 40 (rec. A).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Deut 18:20-22.



The Sibyl admonished the reader one last time. The Sibyl's claim to antiquity is rounded off by the statement that the first things (τὰ πρῶτα) that happened to Noah have now come full circle by the last things (τὰ ἔσχατα) which had been foretold by her (821). These two final lines sum up the book as a whole: The Sibyl has foretold everything from the beginning of the world until its end. Most of these prophecies have already come true in the days of the intended readers which accounts for the truthfulness of the Sibyl. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to hearken to her prophecies one last time because everything else, the downfall of Rome, the judgement of the wicked and the manifestation of God's divine dominion on earth will come true as well.

## 11 Part III: Images of Space

### 11.1 The divine dominion and Utopia in related literature

In order to set the divine dominion in the Third Sibyl in relation to contemporary Judaism it is necessary to take a look at other texts about the dominion of God and the role of the people of God in its establishment. I shall look into Daniel (LXX), the Wisdom of Solomon, and Philo. While Daniel serves as a basis for the Sibyl's apocalyptic orientation, Wisdom, Philo, and Sirach<sup>1</sup> for that matter share with her the notion of the superiority of the Mosaic Law and that in fact it is none other than the law of nature that applies to everyone. Both Wis and Philo share the notion that the people of God are indeed examples for the rest of mankind to live according to the law. Only through righteous practice, divine dominion, and the Golden Age can be realised.

#### 11.1.1 The book of Daniel

The establishment of divine dominion on earth is a theme that is found in biblical and Second Temple literature. The most influential text in this regard is the Book of Daniel on which most later texts base their idea of God's eschatological kingship. With regard to the Sibyl, we have already seen the influence of the Septuagint in general and of Daniel in particular. There is terminology in lines 767-771 similar to Daniel (Dan 2:44; Dan 7:14) that deserve attention. We have already seen that the Sibyl was familiar with material from Daniel (and with the LXX as a whole). Some of this material has been discussed in section II with regard to the empire scheme.

In the book of Daniel, which was written under the impression of the Seleucid reign, it is said that God would exercise his eternal kingly authority by his eventual destruction of the hostile Gentile kingdoms and the establishment of his own kingdom. Here, his holy ones would rule, the faithful would be raised from the dead and the wicked would be punished.<sup>2</sup> However, as we have it the book is set in Babylon during the Babylonian Exile. It mirrors the (mis)fortunes of the Jews in the Diaspora (because it is set in Babylon) and their attitude towards foreign kingship.

In Dan 2 and 7, 'the crucial concept is that of the sovereignty or kingship of God'<sup>3</sup>. Dan 2 and 7 presuppose the notion established in Dan 1-6, i.e. the relation of worldly empires, which are transitory, to the kingship and kingdom of God. Dan 2 tells of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of

<sup>1</sup> See commentary on lines 757b-761.

<sup>2</sup> Dan 2:34-45; 4:14-34; 7:1-28; 12:1-3:13; cf. 2 Macc 7:9-29.

<sup>3</sup> Collins, 1993, 174.

the four world kingdoms and of Daniel's interpretation. I discussed the kingdom scheme in Daniel already.<sup>4</sup> In Daniel's interpretation, a final kingdom will be erected by God and will surpass all human kingdoms (Babylonia, Medes, Persia, and Greece). In Dan 2:44 it is said that the divine kingdom shall not be left to another people (καὶ αὕτη ἡ βασιλεία ἄλλο ἔθνος οὐ μὴ ἐάσῃ) but for the holy ones of God (7:27). It will grind all other kingdoms to pieces.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Sibyl, God will first destroy the human kingdoms and then establish his own. The Sibyl and Daniel have the final kingdom being set up by God and lasting forever (εἰς αἰῶνας / εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) in common.<sup>6</sup> In Dan 2-6 – excluding Dan 2:44 – there is no opposition between kingdom of God and a world empire: they are virtually the same because God gives dominion to and takes it from the earthly rulers.<sup>7</sup> 'For the present, Daniel is content to serve the Gentile overlords to whom the Most High had given the kingdom'<sup>8</sup>. The human kingdoms and the Gentile sovereigns are an accepted fact. However, their dominion is permitted by God and he can take it away accordingly.<sup>9</sup> In Dan 2-6 God reigns through the earthly kingdoms.<sup>10</sup> This view changes drastically in Dan 7.

In Daniel 7, the four kingdoms are depicted as four beasts. Chapter 7 of Daniel discards the possibility that Jews can live successfully in the service of Gentile kings and looks to the divine judgement where the kingdoms will be destroyed and substituted by an eternal divine kingdom. 'No longer are the Gentile kings seen as legitimate, if temporary, agents of the divine sovereignty. They are now viewed as beasts from the sea'<sup>11</sup>. The most offensive and immediately present Gentile kingdom will be destroyed. In the case of Daniel this would be the dominion of Antiochus IV while in Rev 13:1 the beast from the sea is the Roman Empire.

In Dan 7:13f (MT/Theod.) Daniel has a vision of the son of man who is given dominion (ἀρχή) and kingdom (βασιλεία) over all kingdoms and all men by God.<sup>12</sup> 'The indestructibility of the kingdom recalls [...] the sovereignty attributed to God in Dan 3:33 [4:3]; 6:27'<sup>13</sup>. Although human monarchs 'receive the kingdom' from God (Dan 6:1), God is the supreme sovereign. In Daniel (and the War Scroll from Qumran) divine sovereignty is

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Comments on lines 158b-161.

<sup>5</sup> Dan 7:7, 19; cf. 1 Cor 15:24.

<sup>6</sup> καὶ ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις τῶν βασιλέων τούτων στήσει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ βασιλείαν ἄλλην ἣτις ἔσται εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας καὶ οὐ φθαρήσεται καὶ αὕτη ἡ βασιλεία ἄλλο ἔθνος οὐ μὴ ἐάσῃ πατάξει δὲ καὶ ἀφανίσει τὰς βασιλείας ταύτας καὶ αὐτὴ στήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Dan 2:44).

<sup>7</sup> Kratz, 1993, 442f.

<sup>8</sup> Collins, 1993, 175.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Dan 2:21, 37-38, 44 (divine dominion); 4:22-24 (rule is granted to kings if they accept that God holds the true power), 29; 5:18-20, 25-28 (*Mene Tekel*). For the notion that human kingship is granted by God cf. Let. Aris. 15, 37, 45, 125, 271.

<sup>10</sup> Kratz, 1993, 442f.

<sup>11</sup> Collins, 1993, 323.

<sup>12</sup> Dan 7:14 θ.

<sup>13</sup> Collins, 1993, 311.

mediated by angels in the political and military realm.<sup>14</sup> In Daniel 10, the rule of the individual kingdoms of the earth is attributed to angelic ‘princes’ so that the kingdom of the holy ones (ἅγιοι) in Dan 7:18 is extended beyond Israel.<sup>15</sup> In the Sibyl, on the other hand, no princes or governors will rule individual lands or the world as a whole. God is the one and only supreme sovereign over the entire earth. In verse 27 of Daniel 7 all dominions under the heavens (τὴν ἀρχὴν πασῶν τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν βασιλειῶν) are given to the Most High (ὑψίστος). Most notably is the phrase τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν βασιλειῶν which signifies the kingdoms of the earth in contrast to the dominion of God to which they will be subjected and which is everlasting (Dan 7:27b). The hope for the divine dominion that will surpass all human kingdoms within the book of Daniel is undoubtedly due to the events of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.<sup>16</sup> This dominion, established by God, is given to the holy people, i.e. the people of Israel (Dan 7:27).

The topos of world dominion through representatives of God or even by his people at the end of days is a commonplace in most Jewish apocalypses and hence scholars readily assume the same for the Sibyl (see above). The idea in some of these texts is based on Isa 14 or Daniel 7. In Daniel 7, one like the son of man will enact the divine kingdom; the one like the son of man will rule these empires and all nations of the earth will serve him.<sup>17</sup>

What the Sibyl has in common with Daniel is the expectation of the coming of a divine kingdom or dominion that will overthrow the current earthly and most terrible and hubristic dominion. The immediate human dominion is the last and most gruesome in a chain of kingdoms. It is a theme of Dan 1-6 that human kingdoms are transitory.<sup>18</sup> Gentile monarchs bring about their own downfall by hubris and idolatry.<sup>19</sup> ‘The ultimate kingdom set up by the God of heaven is only the corollary and final fulfillment of the sovereignty of the Most High ...’<sup>20</sup>. The Sibyl shares this concept; the divine dominion will succeed the human kingdoms after judgement has come to pass.

Moreover, the Sibyl and Daniel share the idea that God is the supreme sovereign and that his dominion will last perpetually. However, there are also striking differences. We have seen that in Daniel the divine dominion will be established for and given to the holy people (Israel). However, according to the Sibyl, God will erect the βασιλῆιον among all men

<sup>14</sup> Collins, 1993, 319. Cf. Dan 7:14; Dan 10; 1QM X, 1-12; 1QM XII; 1QM XVII, 7-8. Cf. also Camponovo, 1984, 292-306.

<sup>15</sup> Collins, 1993, 312ff argues that the holy ones are angelic beings. In light of Dan 7:27 where the reference is explicitly to λαός ἅγιος ὑψίστου (עליונין קדישי לעם) the holy ones must be understood as the people of Israel.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Collins, 1993, 323.

<sup>17</sup> Dan 7:14ff. Cf. Dan 2:44; 3:4; 3:33; 6:27. Cf. Rev 5 esp. 5:10. Cf. Matt 19:28; Rev 1:13; 14:14.

<sup>18</sup> Kratz, 1993, 443.

<sup>19</sup> Dan 4:22-24; 5:18-21, 25-28.

<sup>20</sup> Collins, 1993, 175.

(πάντας ὑπ' ἀνθρώπους). In addition the Sibyl never speaks of the people of God as a holy people, only the law is holy and those who observe it are εὐσεβεῖς (769).<sup>21</sup> The βασιλῆιον will be erected among all people, which means that all people (who obey the law of God) will partake in it.

In the Third Sibyl sovereignty is God's alone. Rather than that the divine dominion in the Third Sibyl will be available to everyone who turns to God, not just to the εὐσεβεῖς. In Daniel, on the other hand, the kingdom is given to the holy people to hold the nations of the earth sway.<sup>22</sup>

Whereas Daniel looks to the return of native, i.e. Judean/Israelite kingship, the Sibyl has a more universalistic outlook this being largely owed to her being a Gentile prophetess. Other than in Daniel, dominion is not explicitly given to the kings of the earth which suggests that their claims are illegitimate. However, their dominion is repeatedly put to an end by God. The Sibyl and Daniel share a loathing for the unruly foreign rulers but grants the pious Gentiles a place in the future *basilêion* by lessening the political role of the pious people of God within it.<sup>23</sup> She weakens the political aspect by omitting any vocabulary that suggests a master and servant relationship between the people of God and other nations. Furthermore, the king that God will send from the east fades from view after giving rest to war (653, see comments there). He is said to kill some and make treaties with others. While indeed he has a judicial function, like the son of man in Daniel, he fades from view and apparently has no place in the future kingdom. Additionally the king from the east will achieve all this not by his own plans but according to the will of God (656-57).

### 11.1.2 Wisdom of Solomon<sup>24</sup>

Although much of what the Sibyl says about the divine dominion is indebted to Daniel, another text has to be taken into account; the Wisdom of Solomon. The Third Sibyl shares a couple of features with Wis: both adhere to Hellenistic literary forms and they do not give away their Jewish identity although their theology is thoroughly Jewish.<sup>25</sup> Wis also shares with the Sibyl the notion of God being (enthroned) in heaven.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore the omission of

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.213, 218, except Sib. Or. 3.573 where the adjective ἱερός is used of the pious which in my opinion points to correct worship in light of temple terminology.

<sup>22</sup> Dan 7:27. Cf. 1QM XII 7-18.

<sup>23</sup> In Daniel the nations will partake in the kingdom to come only insofar as they will serve the son of man (Dan 7:14): καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς κατὰ γένη καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῷ λατρεύουσα· καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ ἐξουσία αἰώνιος, ἣτις οὐ μὴ ἄρθῃ, καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ, ἣτις οὐ μὴ φθαρῇ.

<sup>24</sup> For a detailed analysis of the passages in question and an overall overview of the eschatology of Wisdom see Blischke, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Camponovo, 1984, 332.

<sup>26</sup> Wis 9:4, 10; 18:15.

names (with regard to Israel) in Wis is reminiscent of the Third Sibyl.<sup>27</sup> In both works this serves as an illustration. The generalization of characters and places of the past makes them easier applicable to the experience and circumstances of people in the present. Furthermore, both texts highlight the ethical laws over against cultic laws; the reverence of the one God is pivotal. On a different level, Wis and Sib. Or. 3 are directed inwards (although the Sibyl pretends to be directed at the nations) to advertise faithfulness in God and obedience to the law among their Jewish addressees. They reflect an inner-Jewish discourse about righteousness and obedience to God. The wicked are not the nations but the backsliding Jews. Most importantly, however, both texts reflect a differentiation between righteous/pious and impious rather than between Jews/Israelites and the nations so that in principle the end time is available to anyone obedient to the law of God.<sup>28</sup> In Wis 3:8 the *ψυχὰι δικάϊων*<sup>29</sup> are said to judge the nations and hold them sway in an undisclosed future while God is said to have dominion over them perpetually.<sup>30</sup> According to Wis 3:1-10, those who pursue righteousness will be rewarded while the wicked will be punished.<sup>31</sup> In Wis 5:14-15, it is said that the *ἀσεβεῖς* will be destitute in the end-time while the *δίκαιοι* will live forever and that they will receive the *βασίλειον* on account of their good deeds.<sup>32</sup> Wis and Sibyl share the idea that only the *δίκαιοι/εὐσεβεῖς*, i.e. those who live according to the law, will live to see the divine dominion which will last forever. However, neither of them gives away whether the reference is to the people of Israel as a whole or if it reflects an inner-Jewish debate on who is righteous and pious and who is not.

Wis 5:17-23 describes a cosmic judgement enacted by God which is not so unlike the oracles of doom in the Third Sibyl. Wis draws from texts such as Isaiah, Malachi, and Daniel and so does the Sibyl. It is also probable that Wis drew from the Sibyl (or vice versa).<sup>33</sup>

Wis 6:3-5 explicitly states that the earthly kings receive their power from God and that they will be punished because they did not keep the law. Wis 6 admonishes the kings to seek

<sup>27</sup> Except read sea in Wis 10:18; 19:7.

<sup>28</sup> In Wis the terms *δίκαιοι* and *ἀσεβεῖς* are opposed whereas the Sibyl has *εὐσεβεῖς* as a description of the pious people of God and *δίκαιος* for ethical behaviour (116, 214, 219, 233, 237, 257, 312, 720, 782–783). The Sibyl uses several epithets to designate the wicked, such as *ἀσεβής* (568), *ἄνομος* (496, 763), *ἄναγνος* (171, 203, 496–497, 695), and *ἄδικος* (183, 362, 496, 498). The *εὐσεβ-* root has 64 occurrences in 4 Macc which is more than in any of the Jewish texts from the Hellenistic period. In 4 Macc it often goes with the law.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. comment on line 724.

<sup>30</sup> *κρῖνοῦσιν ἔθνη καὶ κρατήσουσιν λαῶν, καὶ βασιλεύσει αὐτῶν κύριος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας*. It should be noted that the genitive *αὐτῶν κύριος* can either mean ‘their Lord’ or that the Lord will be king over them. That the reference is to the endtime can be discerned from the phrase *ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς αὐτῶν* which is a typical description of the divine judgement (cf. Jer 6:15; 10:15).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Pss. Sol. 14.

<sup>32</sup> The passage is indebted to Isa 62:3.

<sup>33</sup> Contra Blischke, 2007, 266f who claims that Wis exhibits no closeness, except for a few allusions to 1. En., to ‘apocalyptic’ literature.

wisdom and verse 20 concludes that wisdom (σοφία) leads to dominion (βασιλεία). In Wis 6:4, the will of God (βουλή θεοῦ) is implicitly identified with the law – a concept which we have also seen in the Third Sibyl (see comment on line 574). Law and wisdom are connected here. Hence Wis 6 is not far removed from the Third Sibyl.<sup>34</sup> However, Wis 10:10 implies that the βασιλεία of God is the heavenly world.<sup>35</sup> This view cannot be found in the Third Sibyl.

According to Wis 18:4 the law is given to the entire world through the people of God. The immortal light of the law is given to the world through them. Eventually, the nations will acknowledge the law. This is another decisive similarity to the Third Sibyl.

### 11.1.3 Philo and the Golden Age

Like the Sibyl, Philo is highly interested in the relation of mankind and the law.<sup>36</sup> Philo not only discusses the eschatological future of Israel but also that of the nations and their relation accordingly. Like in the Third Sibyl, the people of God, who is ‘wise and capable of understanding’<sup>37</sup>, serve as an example for the nations. The people of God are described as better, royal, wise and understanding and not far removed from God.<sup>38</sup> Philo shares with the Sibyl that it is the task of the people of God (in his case Israel) to guide the nations to a law-abiding life. As in the Third Sibyl, the Golden Age in Philo’s works essentially depends on the fulfilment of the law on part of the people.

According to Philo, the vast majority of the Jewish people as well as the proselytes will partake in God’s blessing.<sup>39</sup> Only the idolaters among the Jews seem to be excluded.<sup>40</sup> According to Borgen, the purpose of Praem. Is, ‘to equip the Jews for their God-given call to serve as the centre and chief of mankind’<sup>41</sup>. It is the primary aim of Praem. to educate the Jews to a law-abiding life to be examples for the rest of mankind.

In Praem. 79-172, Philo discusses the opportunity of blessing and curse for Israel in light of Lev 26 and Deut 28.<sup>42</sup> Aside the biblical tradition, Philo also draws from a variety of other traditions, most importantly the images of the Golden Age and related images.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Blischke, 2008, 166f.

<sup>35</sup> ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ (Jacob) βασιλείαν θεοῦ. Cf. Camponovo, 1984, 374.

<sup>36</sup> Philo, Mos. 2.25-44; Virt. 119f.

<sup>37</sup> Philo, Praem. 83.

<sup>38</sup> Philo, Praem. 164, 171, 83f.

<sup>39</sup> Philo, Praem. 83.

<sup>40</sup> Philo, Praem. 162.

<sup>41</sup> Borgen, 1987, 29.

<sup>42</sup> Philo, Praem. 85-126 = blessing; 127-61 = curse.

<sup>43</sup> Holtz, 2007, 141f cf. also the monograph by Gratz, 1967 on which she bases her observations.

Holtz distinguishes five central eschatological expectations with regard to the future of creation in the works of Philo<sup>44</sup>: a) peace between man and beast (Praem. 85-90), b) universal peace among men c) the abundance of nature (Praem. 98-105), d) healing of the body, and e) the renewal of the land.<sup>45</sup> I will only go into a), b), and c) as those are the ones he has in common with the Sibyl.

a) Universal peace between men and beast is an image presupposed by Lev 26:6.<sup>46</sup> Peace will be among the animals as well as between them and mankind.<sup>47</sup> While the peace between men and beasts is the return to a paradisiacal state, the peace among the beasts is drawn from Isa 11. Josephus combines these two images.

b) Universal peace will not only be among the beasts but also among men.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, Philo has two different views on eschatological peace. One is based on Lev 26:6<sup>49</sup>. The land (Israel) will be under attack from the nations (*Völkersturm*) but will be availed by God.<sup>50</sup> The other expects an eschatological hero, who is not a Davidic king or Messiah.<sup>51</sup> Either way, the eschatological war culminates in the rule of the people of Israel over the nations – not to punish them but to benefit them through having a virtues example.<sup>52</sup> In light of classical state theory the dominion of superior over the humble is justified.<sup>53</sup> This is also paralleled in the Third Sibyl where the people of God serve as moral guides for the nations.

Furthermore, the people (all mankind)<sup>54</sup> will live peacefully, free of envy, and share their possessions communally.<sup>55</sup> The absence of war and private property is a motif found in classical images of the Golden Age.<sup>56</sup> The absence of war and private property also go hand in hand in the Third Sibyl.<sup>57</sup>

c) The abundance of nature is also inspired by Lev 26:4f. Those who lead a simple life in the present will live in abundant fertility in the future while the self-indulgent will have

<sup>44</sup> Holtz, 2007, 141-150.

<sup>45</sup> Holtz, 2007, 141.

<sup>46</sup> Lev 26:6: καὶ ἀπολῶ θηρία πονηρὰ ἐκ τῆς γῆς ὑμῶν.

<sup>47</sup> Philo mentions the animals known from Isa 11:6ff but he also adds others, such as Indian elephants and tigers which suggests that this peace will be universal (Holtz, 2007, 143).

<sup>48</sup> Philo, Praem. 93-97.

<sup>49</sup> καὶ πόλεμος οὐ διελεύσεται διὰ τῆς γῆς ὑμῶν.

<sup>50</sup> Philo, Praem. 93-94.

<sup>51</sup> Philo, Praem. 94-97. Cf. Borgen, 1997, 276.

<sup>52</sup> Philo, Praem. 97.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Holtz, 2007, 153.

<sup>54</sup> Holtz, 2007, 149.

<sup>55</sup> Philo, Praem. 87.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Gatz, 1967, 229; cf. Virgil, Ecl. 4.22, 24.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. line 783.



little.<sup>58</sup> The motif of abundant fertility is rooted in images of Eden but can also be found in classical ideas of the Golden Age.<sup>59</sup>

In all of this, it is Philo's goal to admonish his readers to a life according to the law.<sup>60</sup> The same can be concluded with regard to the Sibyl. With all the utopian images the law is made palatable for the reader. The closeness to classical utopias not only shows Philo's and the Sibyl's indebtedness to these traditions but also that of their respective readers. The readers would have been familiar with these images from either the bible or classical mythology.

The texts presented outline the eschatological renewal of creation in the sense of the Golden Age.<sup>61</sup> The whole of mankind will participate in this paradisiacal age provided the Jews fulfil their role and observe the law.<sup>62</sup> Only the special position of the Jewish people makes this possible.<sup>63</sup> The Sibyl and Philo share the notion that the law applies to everyone and that the Jewish people are supposed to be an example for the rest of mankind. Provided they fulfil their role, utopian conditions will be brought about by God. These conditions are in line with biblical utopias as well as descriptions of the Golden Age in classical texts.

#### 11.1.4 Sirach

We have already seen a few topics that the Sibyl has in common with the book of Sirach which is only a few generations older than the Sibyl. Both are autobiographical and divinely inspired. In Sir 17:1 the law of life (νόμος ζωῆς) is given to all mankind. This notion is not far removed from the establishment of a common law that applies to all men in the Third Sibyl. In a poem in Sir 35:1-5 we find the notion that sacrifice is worthless without the required moral obligations (i.e. the observance of the law). In the Third Sibyl we have observed that to live around the temple has become a metaphor for living according to the law and thus being under God's protection. Both texts develop and share the idea, by drawing on a Biblical commonplace, that sacrifice can be replaced entirely by righteous praxis. In Sir 24 wisdom (i.e. the law) takes up residence in Israel. In the Third Sibyl it is God who resides in the "maiden" perpetually.

---

<sup>58</sup> Philo, Praem. 99-100; QG 2.47. Cf. Mark 10:31; Matt 19:30; 20:16; Luke 13:30.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Gatz, 1967, 229.

<sup>60</sup> Holtz, 2007, 144.

<sup>61</sup> Holtz, 2007, 149.

<sup>62</sup> Holtz, 2007, 150.

<sup>63</sup> Holtz, 2007, 162.

## 11.2 The Law in the Third Sibyl

### 11.2.1 Introduction

The law has a central position in the Third Sibyl. Only through the fulfilment of the law will the divine dominion be manifested on earth and the world be transformed into a paradisiacal utopian state. It is the task of the people of God, to whom the law was given in the first place, to live according to it and be an example for others. Once the nations turn to God and his law the people have fulfilled their role as moral guides. The way of God is the primary spatial image with regard to the law used in the Third Sibyl. Eventually, the law will be turned into a common law that applies to all people. The common law is an image borrowed from Stoicism and is a commonplace in Jewish Hellenistic texts. Furthermore, the law itself is Utopia and constitutes the divine dominion.

Just like the LXX the Sibyl uses the term νόμος when she speaks of the law. In ancient Greek, every type of νόμος was considered as volition of the divine will. By the fifth century BCE νόμος came to be used as a term for any written law in the legal sense.<sup>64</sup> Keeping the laws led people to righteousness, it was therefore crucial for laws to be just.<sup>65</sup> By the end of the first century BCE it was commonly acknowledged that there was one particular law that could be considered to have been constituted by the gods.<sup>66</sup> It was considered men's duty to fulfil this law by his natural ability to do so.<sup>67</sup>

In the LXX νόμος is the common rendition for תורה.<sup>68</sup> In the pseudepigrapha and other post-biblical texts it can also denote just the Pentateuch whereas Philo and Josephus use it in reference to Greek as well as Jewish law.<sup>69</sup> In the works of Philo it even becomes identical, to a certain extent, to the Greek concept of natural law. A general problem in Diaspora Judaism was that many laws of the Torah were only, if at all, applicable in Israel/Judea, such as the agricultural laws or laws that have to do with the temple. Therefore a general tendency can be observed in Diaspora texts to lessen the importance of cultic laws over against ethical laws.<sup>70</sup> Particularly after 70 CE, the law was a crucial marker of Jewish identity. The works of Philo, among others, show that there was no antagonism between the Jewish law and others, on the contrary, philosophical concepts could be integrated into the Jewish law.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Blischke, 2007, 161.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Plato, Leg. 630C.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Cicero, Leg. 1.42.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Blischke, 2007, 161.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Exod 14:49; Lev 19:19; Num 5:29; Deut 4:44 et al.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Josephus, Ant. 2.193; 3.152, 233; B.J. 2.122, 195; Philo, Op. 1.143; Leg. 3.194, 205; Migr. 1.69; Somn. 2.154, 227.

<sup>70</sup> This is not to say that cultic laws were disregarded entirely. Many texts attest for the importance of the Shabbat or the dietary laws.

<sup>71</sup> Philo on pre-mosaic, i.e. natural law: Mos. 2:48; Deus 117, 122, 140; Migr. 130; Abr. 275-276; Opif. 1.

It is evident that the Sibyl uses νόμος with regard to the biblical law.<sup>72</sup> We do not know, however, what texts she had in mind when she refers to the law. What can be deduced from the text is that the law was given to the people of God and not to the other nations. However, all nations are technically capable of keeping the law and they are continuously rebuked for not doing so and admonished to change their ways. The law is referred to as the law of God or as holy law. Hence its divine origin is evident. The references to the will of God also point to the law. The will of God is evidently manifested in and mediated through the law. When God will establish his dominion on earth he will also complete a common law for the righteous people that will survive his judgement. Here, reminiscence to the concept of natural law can be observed. The law is pivotal for the Sibyl's theology because only those who obey it will live to see the blissful days after the divine intervention.

### 11.2.2 The common law

It has been observed that the establishment of the common law in line 757f is closely related to the Stoic concepts of common law and natural law.<sup>73</sup> Before the Stoics talked of natural law, they spoke of κοινὸς νόμος, a common law. According to Martens κοινὸς νόμος 'appears in connection with every major Stoic thinker'<sup>74</sup>. The common 'law is seen as something more than simply the written law of the city. It is connected with the nature of God.'<sup>75</sup>

This paragraph shall highlight the Sibyl's perception of specific laws as well as their relation to Greek thought. According to Buitenwerf, the interpretation of the law in the Third Sibyl is untenable.<sup>76</sup> He suggests that the critique in lines 599-600 and 686-687 must refer to a law that is known to all people so that sometimes the Sibyl speaks of Mosaic and sometimes of natural law.<sup>77</sup> However, this is not necessarily a contradiction. Much can be deduced about the law throughout the book. The Sibyl says that holy law, i.e. the Mosaic Law was given to the pious people of God (769). The common law will be completed in the end-time (757). However, these are not two different laws. As I have already argued in the commentary section, the holy law becomes the common law. That the holy law and the common law are one and the same is also evident from the fact that the people of God, to whom the holy law

<sup>72</sup> Sib. Or. 3. 256, 259, 276, 284, 580, 600, 686, 719, 757, 768.

<sup>73</sup> See comment on lines 757ff.

<sup>74</sup> Martens, 2003, 18. Cf. Zeno apud Plutarch, Alex. 329a-b (SVF 1.262); Chrysippus apud Diogenes Laertius 7.87-89; Pindar, frg. 69, Cleanthes, Hymn to Zeus (SVF 1.537).

<sup>75</sup> Martens, 2003, 19.

<sup>76</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 339.

<sup>77</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 339f.

was given, are supposed to be moral guides for all mortals (194-195). Moreover, the law derives from God unlike the laws of the Greeks and Romans.<sup>78</sup> The divine origin of the law and God's sovereignty go hand in hand. The Sibyl treats the law in fact as natural law.<sup>79</sup>

It is said of the holy law that the pious transgressed it and that therefore they were led into Exile (276ff). Later on the people are admonished to heed it (284). In line 600 it is said that the nations transgress the holy law, which implies that technically they are capable of adhering to it. The common law will be completed for all people, i.e. all people who will survive God's judgement. Nonetheless, the common law will not be a new law, it will be the holy law that will then apply to all people. The people of God shall be moral guides for all mortals (195), so that they too can be part of God's βασιλῆιον.<sup>80</sup>

The ethical and religious requirements for partaking in God's dominion are 'found in hortatory passages, framed by eschatological predictions'<sup>81</sup> that outline the requirements for either salvation or judgement. Accordingly, the destruction of the Macedonians will be brought about because of their warfare (171-174) and that of the Romans because of their unjust arrogance, homosexuality and greed (182-190). Later on the Greeks are condemned for idolatry (545-555) and several nations are accused of transgressing the law in general (599-600)<sup>82</sup>. This is contrasted by the statement that the people of God adhere to the divine will (βουλή) which God has given them insight into (574, 584). In lines 762-766, the Sibyl summarises what God demands of the people in order to be saved from judgement: abstention from idolatry and worship of the one God, abstention from adultery and (male) homosexual intercourse, rearing of one's offspring and not killing it. In the end, the penitent nations will turn to God and ponder the law of the Most High (710-731). The reign of the seventh king of Egypt marks the turning point of history when the people of the Great God would assume their role as moral guides for all men (194-195). Their role will be fulfilled once the nations abandon their customs and honour God and his law (702-731).

Collins has pointed out the affinities of some Jewish Hellenistic texts with Greek philosophy.<sup>83</sup> In that chapter he also discusses the Third Sibyl and her universalistic approach. He concludes that here Jews were be partaking in a widespread philosophical debate.<sup>84</sup> Hellenistic Jewish authors were able to express the laws of Judaism in Greek terms so that

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Let. Aris. 3, 15-16.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 164.

<sup>80</sup> While Let. Aris. shares the notion that the law is the most just of all laws (3, 15-16, 127) it is only for the Jews to practice (129-131). Cf. Weber, 2000, 133.

<sup>81</sup> Collins, 2000, 160.

<sup>82</sup> παραβάντες ἀθανάτοιο θεοῦ ἀγνὸν νόμον.

<sup>83</sup> Collins, 2000, 155-185.

<sup>84</sup> Collins, 2000, 159.

they appeared in accordance with natural law while '[d]istinctive laws such as circumcision and dietary laws were usually played down'<sup>85</sup>. There is no reference to dietary laws or circumcision in the Third Sibyl either.<sup>86</sup> From the time of Philometor on, Jewish documents reflect an emerging common ethic emphasising those aspects of the law that were appealing to those enlightened Greeks and fitted into the self-understanding of the Jewish authors as enlightened Hellenes – such as monotheism, prohibition of idolatry, adultery and homosexuality.

In the Third Sibyl the eulogies of the people of God are contrasted with the condemnation of sins of the nations.<sup>87</sup> The law, which was given from heaven to the people at Mount Sinai (255-258), has a central role in all of this. The Sibyl is of the conviction that the law applies to the nations just as well as the people God and therefore they can be condemned for failing to heed it equally (599-600). The Sibyl's perception of the law can be described in terms of the Stoic concept of natural law.<sup>88</sup> It is presupposed that every nation knows essential law by nature. The Sibyl appears to regard Jewish ethics as universal, the only difference being that Jews put them into practice, whereas others do not.<sup>89</sup> Philo regards the Mosaic Law as the perfect embodiment of the natural law.<sup>90</sup> According to Philo, the Mosaic Law is universally recognized and has influenced all other laws on earth.<sup>91</sup>

The concept of natural law was attractive for two reasons. On the one hand, it enabled Jewish thinkers to integrate their own system into what Greek thinkers thought about laws and to show theirs was superior to all other laws. On the other it helped to resolve the question how the patriarchs were god-fearing people who already kept the law before it was given to Moses. According to Philo, Abraham already fulfilled all the commandments of the law long before Moses was born.<sup>92</sup> To Philo, the LXX is the *proclamatio graeca* of the law for the Greek speaking world.<sup>93</sup> Like the Sibyl, he does not focus on the giving of the law to

---

<sup>85</sup> Collins, 2000, 160. This concept particular evokes the New Testament texts, such as Acts, where the focus on the ethical law is described as a debate between the followers of Paul and Peter at the Council of Jerusalem. Cf. Acts 15. Cf. Matt 5:17-48; 12:1-8; 19:3-12, 16-26; 22:34-40; John 7:22-24; 8:1-11; Rom 7:1-16; 13:8-10. Philo frequently exhibits the notion that cultic laws have a general ethical outlook. In that sense he interprets the law of circumcision as not only practical but also ethical inasmuch as it safeguards honouring the Creator (Philo, Spec. 1.8-11).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. also Buitenwerf, 2003, 364.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 162.

<sup>88</sup> Collins, 2000, 162.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 384.

<sup>90</sup> Philo, Abr. 275ff; Decal. 132; Mos. 2.44; Opif. 61; Spec. 2.37; Cicero, Leg. 1.18-19. On Philo cf. Martens, 2003; Holtz, 2007, 381-393.

<sup>91</sup> Philo, Mos. 2:20.

<sup>92</sup> Philo, Abr. 275.

<sup>93</sup> Holtz, 2007, 391. Cf. Borgen, 1997, 140-44.

Israel as a onetime event, but rather as a continuous revelation to all mankind.<sup>94</sup> While Philo's endeavour is to defend Judaism against the accusations of misanthropy made by Manetho, among others, which opens up Judaism to outsiders, the Sibyl is directed inwards. The Sibyl's goal is to reassure Diaspora Jews of their own heritage and tradition and also reassure them that the law is compatible and yet superior to the ethical and religious systems surrounding them. The Sibyl's universalism presupposes that the nations are required to keep the law which God renders into a common law. For that reason dietary laws or circumcision are omitted. Although first and foremost directed at Jews, the Sibyl includes the nations in her concept of divine dominion.

According to Barclay, the Third Sibyl is dominated by social alienation and cultural antagonism.<sup>95</sup> However, the Sibyl's repeated appeals to conversion are not merely polemical. It has been noted by scholars that the Sibyl includes the Greeks among the wayward people.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, it seems that the Third Sibyl is aimed at a Jewish readership reassuring them of their cultural heritage on the one hand and opening up to Hellenism on the other. As we have it, the Third Sibyl can just as well be read as a paraenesis for those Jews who run the risk of deviating too far from the law. This is especially prominent in the account of the Babylonian Exile which the Sibyl blames on the people's backsliding. The role of the people of the Great God is to be a paradigm for the nations so that they will realise their error and turn to God to head his law. However, this could equally be understood as a call to the Jews to fulfil their allotted role in universal history and an exhortation to remain faithful to the law that was given to them. Eventually, in the final utopian state they will live quietly around the temple and the nations will abandon their idolatry and honor God and his law alone (703-731). The idea is paralleled in the works of Philo: 'I believe that each nation would abandon its peculiar ways, and, throwing overboard their ancestral customs, turn to honouring our laws alone.'<sup>97</sup>

A few aspects of the law shall be discussed to exemplify the Sibyl's affinities with the concept of common or natural law.

#### 11.2.2.1 Monotheism

The basic religious assumption of the Third Sibyl is monotheism. The Sibyl regards idolatry as the cardinal sin from which all others derive. The condemnation of idolatry is

<sup>94</sup> Holtz, 2007, 391f; Cf. Borgen, 1997, 143. Cf. Comments on lines 234-244; 721-24; 757ff; 767ff. See also Geiger, 2010 who discusses the same concept for Deuteronomy.

<sup>95</sup> Barclay, 1996, 218-225.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Gruen, 1998a, 287; Buitenwerf, 2003; Collins, 2000.

<sup>97</sup> Philo, Mos. 2.44 (Colson, LCL). Cf. Philo, Praem. 165ff.

based on the euhemeristic account of the Greek Gods. The Titans, who in Greek mythology are the ancestors of the Olympic Gods, are portrayed as deified human kings with an unruly claim to universal dominion (110-155). The Titans probably are identical with the first arrogant and impious Greek kings who set up idols of dead gods referred to in lines 551-554.<sup>98</sup>

In line 629 the Sibyl states that God alone is god and that there is no other (αὐτὸς γὰρ μόνος ἐστὶ θεὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ἕτ' ἄλλος). The statement is repeated in line 760. 'The proclamation of a single God (εἷς, μόνος) is found throughout Jewish, Christian, and late antique pagan sources'.<sup>99</sup>

Other than pagan henotheists the author of the Third Sibyl is convinced that other gods do not exist.<sup>100</sup> While not all texts reject that other gods exist the denial of the existence of any other god is a strong indication for monotheism.<sup>101</sup> The Sibyl presupposes the conviction that there is no other god. This conviction clearly exemplifies the Sibyl's role as a prophet on behalf of the Jewish god. It also reflects the possible attitude of Diaspora Judaism towards the religions that surrounded it. However, rather than merely antagonizing their environment, Collins notes that some Greek thinkers favoured monotheism and admired the Jews for it.<sup>102</sup> Things in opposition to Greek religion, such as monotheism, were considered admirable by authors such as Strabo.<sup>103</sup> Criticism of idolatry was not uncommon in the philosophers and the tendency to monotheism was furthered by the Stoics.<sup>104</sup> Hecataeus of Abdera shows particular interest in the Jewish law and in the lawgiver Moses.<sup>105</sup> He emphasises the monotheism of the Jews and notes that they rejected anthropomorphism. He also relates that children should be raised and not exposed and that the poor should be supported. Hecataeus was generally interested in laws. He preferred the Egyptian laws of the Greek laws. His mostly favourable attitude towards the Jewish law results from its similarities with Egyptian laws.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 163 n. 31.

<sup>99</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 535.

<sup>100</sup> Buitenwerf, 2003, 350.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.760; 8.377; Test. Orph. 13 (Urfassung), 16 (Rec. A); cf. Deut 4:35; Isa 45:5.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 156-185. Cf. Hecataeus (GLAJJ I 11); Strabo, Geogr. 12.2.35-36.

<sup>103</sup> Strabo, Geogr. 16.2.35-36.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Cleanthes, Hymn to Zeus.

<sup>105</sup> Apud Diodorus Siculus, 40.3. Cf. Josephus, C. Ap. 1.190-191.

<sup>106</sup> Collins, 2000, 156.

### 11.2.2.2 Astrology and astronomy, things that lead astray

The Sibyl takes a distinctive position in her condemnation of astrology (220-228). While many Jewish writings from the period display a positive attitude towards astrology and astronomy and even depict Abraham as their inventor<sup>107</sup>, others are entirely against it.<sup>108</sup> In the Graeco-Roman world, astrology was seen as a basis of philosophy and divination was defended by some Stoics.<sup>109</sup> Chances are the Sibyl remained faithful to the deuteronomistic attitude to divination and the like to take sides in an inner-Jewish debate. However, a change in attitude can be found in the Roman era. Cicero notes that one should not rely on Chaldean astrologers and lists false prophecies made to Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar.<sup>110</sup>

The Sibyl's strong attitude against astrology is related to the notion that God lives in heaven.<sup>111</sup> The conception of God's presence in heaven became relevant during the Babylonian exile when the temple, i.e. God's earthly abode, was destroyed. In the Hebrew Bible, God's presence in heaven is frequently linked to worldly places such as Mount Horeb (Deut 4:11, 36) or Israel (Deut 26:15). The concept of God's residence in heaven bears the risk of worshipping something other than him such as the stars, the sun and moon, the hosts of heaven or the birds.<sup>112</sup>

### 11.2.2.3 Sexual laws

The Sibyl alludes to the prohibition of adultery a few times.<sup>113</sup> Sexual intercourse with anyone other than one's husband or wife is repeatedly forbidden by biblical law. Collins notes that sexual laws such as prohibition of homosexuality are central to Jewish tradition but that they could also be expressed in Hellenistic terms.<sup>114</sup> Some Greek thinkers shared the Jewish attitude to sexual offences although in general they were harsher on women than on men.<sup>115</sup>

Male homosexuality is the most frequently condemned sin in Jewish Hellenistic writings.<sup>116</sup> Homosexuality and pederasty<sup>117</sup> were accepted and applied cultural phenomena

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 1.168; *Ps.-Eup.* Apud Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 9.17.8.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *Jub.* 12.17; *Philo*, *Abr.* 84; *Migr.* 187-188; *1 En.* 8.

<sup>109</sup> Collins, 2000, 163.

<sup>110</sup> Cicero, *Div.* 87-99.

<sup>111</sup> Line 807, see also below: *The Image of God*.

<sup>112</sup> *Deut* 1:10; 4:17-19; 10:22; 17:3; 28:26. Cf. Geiger, 2010, 117.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. lines 357, in lines 573-600 the pious are singled out as honouring holy wedlock, 764.

<sup>114</sup> Collins, 2000, 158. Cf. *Plato*, *Leg.* 8.841 (on adultery); 636, 836 (on homosexuality).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 159. Cf. *Plutarch*, *Lyc.* 20; *Plato*, *Leg.* 8.841-42; *Epictetus*, *Disc.* 2.22.28.

<sup>116</sup> Collins, 2000, 159.

<sup>117</sup> The identification of homosexuality with pederasty is an ancient one that unfortunately can still sometimes be found in modern society. I would like to clarify that I present the two here reflects the ancient view and not my own.



in the ANE and the Graeco-Roman world unlike in Judaism and Christianity.<sup>118</sup> In biblical theology, sexual practices such as pederasty are usually forbidden because they contradict the commandment to multiply and fill the earth in Gen 1:28 (cf. also Gen 2:18-24).<sup>119</sup> Homosexuality and pederasty were perceived as a threat to family structures by the writers of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, sexual practices outside the marriage of a man and a woman are considered adultery in the bible and later Jewish and Christian texts. Sayings by Pseudo-Phocylides<sup>121</sup>, who, like the Sibyl, operates in the guise of a Gentile figure, share the Sibyl's views. These sayings also have a lot in common with Philo's *Hypothetica* and Josephus' *Against Apion*.<sup>122</sup> Philo and Josephus claim to be giving a summary of Jewish law which is highly selective. All three place heavy emphasis on sexual laws such as the condemnation of adultery<sup>123</sup>, homosexuality<sup>124</sup>, rape of a virgin<sup>125</sup>, and abortion<sup>126</sup>. It has been observed that Philo and Josephus seem to be influenced by the so-called unwritten laws by Buzyges, the legendary hero of an Attic priestly tribe whose affinities with the Noachian laws have often been noted.<sup>127</sup> Pseudo-Phocylides' affinities with the Noachian laws have likewise been noted by scholars.<sup>128</sup> In rabbinic Judaism, the Noachian Laws<sup>129</sup>, a list of ten principles that Noah has kept, are fully developed into the law that applies to Gentiles in order to be deemed righteous. The underlying tradition, however, is already attested in Jubilees although the commandments differ from the later rabbinic Noachian Laws.<sup>130</sup> The major difference to the rabbinic Noachian Laws is that Hellenistic Jewish texts do not discriminate between the laws that apply to Jews and those that apply to Gentiles.<sup>131</sup>

According to the Sibyl, Rome's downfall will be brought about because of homosexual conduct and pederasty.<sup>132</sup> In line 764 the reader is admonished not to practice adultery and homosexuality. The combination of adultery, homosexuality, and infanticide also occurs in

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Lev 18:22; 20:13; Sib. Or. 4.34; 5.166, 387, 430; Let. Aris. 152; Ps.-Phoc. Sent. 3.190-192, 214; Philo, Abr. 135; Leg. 2.50; 3.37-42; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.199, 215, 273; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9; Diodorus Siculus, 2.2.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Nissinen, 1998, 42. For the prohibition of homosexuality cf. Lev 18:22 and 20:13.

<sup>120</sup> Nissinen, 1998, 42, 44.

<sup>121</sup> Ps.-Phoc. 177-198.

<sup>122</sup> For a detailed analysis see for instance Gerber, 1997, 112-117.

<sup>123</sup> Philo, Hyp. 7.1.; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.199; Ps.-Phoc. 177-78.

<sup>124</sup> Philo, Hyp. 7.1.; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.199, 215; Ps.-Phoc. 190-91.

<sup>125</sup> Philo, Hyp. 7.1.; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.215; Ps.-Phoc. 198.

<sup>126</sup> Philo, Hyp. 7.7; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.202; Ps.-Phoc. 183.

<sup>127</sup> Collins, 2000, 170.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Van der Horst, 1978, 29, 34, 37, 45, 51, 69, 73-74, 110. Cf. Collins, 2000, 1701-71.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. b. Sanh. 58b-59a

<sup>130</sup> Jub. 7.20, 28.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Collins, 2000, 171.

<sup>132</sup> See also comment on line 186.

Josephus<sup>133</sup>, Pseudo-Phocylides<sup>134</sup>, and Philo<sup>135</sup>. Again, it seems that they reflect concerns and problems of Diaspora Judaism with its Gentile (Greek) environment. The staccato style in which the passage is written is reminiscent of biblical laws. However, even in Greek society there was a long history of criticism on the subject of both homosexuality and pederasty. Plato, for instance, condemns homosexuality as being ‘contrary to nature (παρὰ φύσιν)’.<sup>136</sup>

#### 11.2.2.4 Killing of unwanted newborns

In a final admonition at the end of the book (lines 762-766) the Sibyl warns the reader to worship God alone and not to kill one’s children (765). This is probably an allusion to the Greek practice of killing unwanted newborns or fetuses which is often condemned in Jewish writings.<sup>137</sup> Abortion is also condemned in Jewish-Hellenistic texts although this is not in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>138</sup> The critique of the killing unwanted children is seldom found in Graeco-Roman literature but Juvenal refers to abortion in his satires.<sup>139</sup> Tacitus, on the other hand, relates that the Jews consider it a crime to kill late-born children because they want to increase their numbers.<sup>140</sup>

#### 11.2.2.5 Love of money

The motif of ‘love for money’ (φιλοχρημοσύνη) is a recurring theme in the Third Sibyl.<sup>141</sup> That avarice is a source of disaster is a common conception in the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>142</sup> This notion is also shared by Pseudo-Phocylides.<sup>143</sup>

#### 11.2.2.6 Conclusion

Collins concludes that despite inherent universalism in the focussing of the law on common ethical principles, the Sibyl remains ‘stubbornly particularistic’<sup>144</sup>. While Pseudo-

<sup>133</sup> C. Ap. 2.199-202.

<sup>134</sup> Ps.-Phoc. 175-205. Note that lines 5-79 of Ps.-Phoc. are also interpolated in Sib. Or. 2 56-148 (Ψ).

<sup>135</sup> Spec. 3.110-119.

<sup>136</sup> Plato, Leg. 636c.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Philo, Spec. 3.110-119; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.202.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Philo, Hypoth. 7.7; Ps.-Phoc. 183.

<sup>139</sup> Juvenal, Sat. 6.594-97.

<sup>140</sup> Tacitus, Hist. 5.5.3 cf. GLAJJ II 281. See also Bloch, 2002, 94.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. lines 179-181, 234-236 and 236.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Menander, Fragmenta 557; Diodorus Siculus, 37.30; Dio Chrysostom 4.91, 94, 99; 7.103; 10.14; 17.6, 7, 9, 12; 34.53; Philostratus, Vit. Apoll. 1.38; Ps.-Phoc., 42-48; Philo, spec. 1.21-25; 4.65, 215; 1 Tim 6:9-10.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Ps.-Phoc. 42.

<sup>144</sup> Collins, 2000, 164.

Aristeas is of the conviction that Zeus and the Most High are the same God.<sup>145</sup> According to the euhemeristic account of the Titans Zeus is not even a God in the first place.

However, whether the accusations of Gentile sin are purely external or whether they are also inwardly directed at the Jewish Diaspora community cannot be said with certainty but the possibility should, nonetheless, be kept in mind at all times. Collins furthermore points to the tension between the universalistic understanding of the law and the particularistic attachment to land and temple which, according to him, 'is quite typical of Diaspora Judaism in the Hellenistic period'.<sup>146</sup> However, I tend to disagree. The Sibyl has a universalistic rather than a particularistic outlook. The supposed attachment to a specific geographic place is not obvious to me. The Sibyl does refer to the temple and occasionally to the land but where they are she does not say. For all we know, the land and the temple are *somewhere*. For the Sibyl the precise location of the temple is rather irrelevant. The temple is a symbol of God's sovereignty so that the people are required to make offerings to none other than him.

In the Third Sibyl the law is disconnected from the land which is one of the most crucial differences to the common biblical view. According to Deuteronomy the land will only be possessed by the people provided they adhere to the law.<sup>147</sup> According to the deuteronomistic view the land is not for granted, it has to be earned through a life according to the law. In the Third Sibyl, law obedience guarantees a life in the divine dominion. Furthermore, the law is also a safeguard for penitent Gentiles. The disconnection of the law from the land can also be observed in Second Baruch.<sup>148</sup> Especially in texts that were composed after 70 CE the law begins to take the place of the land.<sup>149</sup>

The principle difference between the concept of Noachian Laws in rabbinic tradition and texts like the Third Sibyl, Josephus, or Pseudo-Phocylides is that the Rabbis clearly differentiate between the laws that apply to Jews and those that apply to Gentiles while the Hellenistic Jewish texts do not. At the end of the Third Sibyl, the common law will be completed for all people to keep (757).<sup>150</sup> With regard to the Sibyl this is also closely related to the fact that she does not single out the Jewish people by election but by their ethical superiority. Accordingly, conversion does not require circumcision and the observance of the dietary laws but rather sacrificing to the one God and observing his law, which is the most

---

<sup>145</sup> Collins, 2000, 164.

<sup>146</sup> Collins, 2000, 165.

<sup>147</sup> Deut 28 cf. Lev 26.

<sup>148</sup> 2 Bar. 85:3. Cf. Lied, 2003, 132-34.

<sup>149</sup> See also below: The law and the temple.

<sup>150</sup> See comments on line 767ff.

just of all laws.<sup>151</sup> However, there is reason to doubt that the Third Sibyl is indeed aimed at the Greeks. Rather than that the Sibyl is directed at Diaspora Jews to show that the Jewish law is superior to any other law and that eventually the Gentiles will realise this. As I have already pointed out the Sibyl has obvious affinities with the wisdom literature in this respect.<sup>152</sup> Sirach seems to have a similar concept of divine law. Much of what Sirach describes as “the law of the Most High” (νόμον ὑψίστου) is of very general nature, such as warnings against adultery or reliance on dreams.<sup>153</sup> According to Sir 17:11 God has given the law of life (νόμος ζωῆς) to all mankind. In Sir 24:23 Sirach identifies wisdom with the book of the covenant of the Most High, the law that Moses has commanded.<sup>154</sup> The Sibyl is in line with the works of Philo or Sirach in her factual treatment of the Mosaic Law as natural or common law. All three of them considered the Mosaic Law as the perfect rendition of natural law.

### 11.2.3 The law and the temple: to ‘live around the temple’ as a spatial metaphor for living according to the law

It is out of the question that the temple was of central importance for second temple Judaism.<sup>155</sup> With regard to the Sibyl, however, the temple does not have a geographical central position but an ethical one. In Sib. Or. 5.247-252, on the other hand, the temple is located in the middle of the land (μεσσηαίος) and is the terrestrial centre of God’s divine dominion.<sup>156</sup> The expression to ‘live around the temple’ is not a geographical term but rather a spatial image that circumscribes an ethical requirement, namely living according to the law of God. It has been observed that the law and the temple are in tandem throughout the book. This connection is particularly evident in the hymn of the penitent Gentiles in line 718-720.<sup>157</sup> While living according to the law is circumscribed as ‘living around the temple’ forsaking it and being led astray led to the destruction of the first temple. However, when the people of God repented, God will send a king to return them from their exile and restore the temple.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. lines 194-195; 702-731.

<sup>152</sup> See comments on line 767ff.

<sup>153</sup> Sir 23:12-27; 32:14-33:3; 44:20.

<sup>154</sup> Ταῦτα πάντα βίβλος διαθήκης θεοῦ ὑψίστου, νόμον ὃν ἐνετείλατο ἡμῖν Μωυσῆς κληρονομίαν συναγωγᾶς Ἰακωβ. Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 358. See also Sir 17.

<sup>155</sup> For the role and the function of the temple in second temple Judaism see: Martin Goodman, ed., *Judaism in the Roman World: Collected Essays* (AJEC 66; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 47–58, 59–68.

<sup>156</sup> For a different view on the temple in the Third Sibyl see Chester, 1991. Chester argues for the central importance and centripetal force of the temple in the Third and Fifth Sibyl. However, the Fifth Sibyl was composed after 70 C.E. and is much more literal about the temple. Chester notes the considerable agreement in emphasis given to the temple by book three and five (cf. Chester, 1991, 39). However, book five is modelled on book three which accounts for the agreement.

<sup>157</sup> See comments there.

This is a view that is paralleled in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in the prophetic books.<sup>158</sup> In lines 574-75 the people of God are exalted for adhering to the counsel of God and paying honour to the temple. Again, the two belong together. Lines 576-579 give a detailed account of temple offerings and line 580 states that they possess the law in righteousness. Temple sacrifice and observance of the law are righteousness. Because the people of God do both, they will live peacefully (581) unlike Hellas, the Persians, Galatians, and all of Asia who transgress the law (600). After the judgement of the wicked and the manifestation of divine dominion, there will be one common law for all people (757) and only one place of worship (772-775). Indeed, this is polemic against the manifold temples of the Gentiles. Since there is only one God there is only one law and only one place of worship that lead to righteousness. Idolatry, however, is disobedience of the law and leads astray and to destruction. The temple has a function on the vertical line. That function, however, goes hand in hand with the law.

The temple lacks any detailed description on its appearance and its splendid interior. Rather than that it serves as a symbol for God's sovereignty (one temple = one God). God is the one to be worshipped and to whom sacrifices should be made. The emphasis on the uniqueness of the temple is the logical inference of the Sibyl's monotheism.<sup>159</sup> The nations' pilgrimage to the temple in the end-time is an image that is drawn from biblical tradition and signifies that they accept God and his law and worship him alone. It is therefore obvious that the temple is the central sanctuary, because it will be the only sanctuary. In the Third Sibyl, the temple becomes the sanctuary for all nations.<sup>160</sup>

The Third Sibyl offers ways and means for Jews in the Diaspora to retain their ancestral culture without being spatially limited. Through righteous practice the people of God are offered a chance to live around the temple wherever they are. In the end, the nations will make pilgrimage to the temple and accept God's law. While the law obedience of the people of God serves as an example for the nations, the world will eventually become a peaceful utopian place. The Sibyl's metaphorical temple (i.e. practicing the law) may have served as a literary substitute for those who could not afford to travel to Jerusalem.<sup>161</sup> At a later stage, it may also have served as consolation when the temple and the city lay in ruins.<sup>162</sup> The law, and possibly the synagogue, offered alternate ways to connect with God far from the homeland.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Amos 9:1-10 over against Amos 9:11ff; Jer 33:4-8; Mic 3 over against Mic 5:1-4; Isa 6 over against 9:5-6; 11:1-9.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 355.

<sup>160</sup> This notion is also shared by Philo (Mos. 2.44).

<sup>161</sup> Philo only travelled to the temple once even though he was wealthy (cf. Philo, Prov. 2.64).

<sup>162</sup> I agree with Collins (1974, 45) though (and disagree with Chester, 1991, 45) that the temple in the final age is the historical temple and not a heavenly one of apocalyptic writings. The passage that presupposes the destruction of the temple in lines 324-336 was inserted at a later stage (see comments there). Collins, however,

Through righteous praxis the divine dominion will be manifested on earth, and the entire earth will be transformed into 'righteous space'<sup>163</sup>. Righteous space is then no longer limited by those who live around the temple. The physical features of the earth will be transformed as well, there will be abundant fertility and no more obstacles. However, there will also be only one temple as there is only one God who will be worshipped at that point.

#### 11.2.4 The *basilêion* and the law: the divine constitution

Divine dominion and keeping of the law are two sides of the same coin in the Third Sibyl. We have already observed that the law (along with the temple) is a key element on the vertical line.<sup>164</sup> The people of God are expected to keep his law in order to partake in his manifested dominion on earth at the end of the book. Furthermore, it was the task of the people of God to be guides for all mortals so that they would accept and heed the law.

Righteous praxis on part of the people will bring about the divine dominion. The role of the people of God is that of paragons for all mankind. It is their task to adhere to the law and be an example for the nations to follow them. The sovereign is God, not his people. There will be a common law for all people, which implies that all will have the same rights and duties. The penitent Gentiles will become part of God's people.

The common law then constitutes the *basilêion*. Whereas the mosaic law was exclusively given to the people of God (and was only implicitly available for the nations) the common law will be the constitution for all people. It was the task of the people of God to guide mankind to a law-abiding life. Once they fulfill their role God will manifest his dominion on earth so that the entire world will be full of his presence. The vertical line comes full circle here.

#### 11.2.5 The law as the way of God, a sapiential motif

The way of God and deviating from it is the primary spatial metaphor used by the Sibyl with regard to the law. We have observed the image in several instances through the course of

---

finds it problematic to relate the Sibyl's attitude to the temple to the supposed origin of the book in Egypt and its closeness to Onias and Leontopolis (Collins, 1974, 53).

<sup>163</sup> The term is derived from Lied (2008). She has observed that in 2 Bar the temple, city, and the land tend to overlap and that there is no clear demarcation between them. All of them are tied to the righteous behaviour of the people so that at the time of destruction the reference to the temple or Jerusalem is simultaneously a reference to the land (cf. especially 31-41). Similar in 2 Bar righteous praxis defines living around the temple in the Third Sibyl. Living around the temple is an ethical condition rather than a spatial definition. Living around the temple defines a new spatial area that is not demarcated by physical or ethnic borders but by righteous praxis. Those who practice the law live around the temple wherever they are.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. comments on Sections II and III.

the book.<sup>165</sup> It was said of the people of God that they do not practice the things which lead astray from the paths of God. Later on the people were punished and led into exile because they had indeed gone astray from the law in implicitly from the way of God (265-81). Once they repented, God sent a king to return them from exile (286-292). Later on the nations, who transgress the law (599-600), realized their error and turned themselves to God they acknowledge that they had gone astray from the path of God (719-23). After the great conversion was brought about and judgement has come to pass, God will establish his divine dominion in the progress making the ways even. Here, the ways and paths signify more than just the physical transformation of the earth but also the ethical transformation of the people that live to see the final utopian age. The vertical line draws to its conclusion when the ways and paths are made even and there is no more deviation or going astray (777-79). There will be a common law that will be accessible and comprehensible for all people. The image of the law as the way of God is common in the Hebrew Bible and LXX and is particularly favoured by wisdom literature.<sup>166</sup> By picking up on the motif the Sibyl is rooted in sapiential tradition.<sup>167</sup>

### 11.2.6 The law as Utopia

Utopias can also be described in terms of political ideals. Plato's Republic probably is the most familiar example for an ideal polis that is not designed to be put in effect but that is meant as an example for political reform (high utopianism).<sup>168</sup> Aristotle's politics, on the other hand, outlines an ideal city-state to be inaugurated if possible (low utopianism).<sup>169</sup> It is, however, beyond the scope of this overview to go into detail here.<sup>170</sup>

In many biblical texts the Mosaic Law is described as the ideal constitution. Collins regards the Levitical regulations regarding the sabbatical and jubilee years as symbols for the utopian (or eutopian) character of the law because of their ethical orientation.<sup>171</sup> It is uncertain whether either was actually practiced in ancient Israel (*eutopia*) or whether they were exilic ideals (*utopia*). In the Second Temple period the accentuation of the ethical laws over the cultic laws increased in wisdom circles.<sup>172</sup> Philo describes Moses as "the best of all lawgivers

<sup>165</sup> Cf. lines 228-233; 275-279; 548; 721-723.

<sup>166</sup> See the common law above for details.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Wis 5:6-7; 12:24; Sir 2:15; 11:26; 21:10; 32:20; 37:15; 47:24; Ps. Sol. 6:2; 8:6; 10:13; 18:10-12; Prov 4:19; 9:15; 10:29 (only MT); 14:8.

<sup>168</sup> Beavis, 2006, 19. Cf. Plato, Resp.

<sup>169</sup> Beavis, 2006, 19. Cf. Aristotle, Pol. See Beavis, 2006, 19-22 for details.

<sup>170</sup> For detailed discussion see Beavis, 2006, 19-28 and Dawson, 1992, 7.

<sup>171</sup> Exod 21:2-6; 23:10-11; Deut 15:1-18 (Sabbatical); Lev 25 (Jubilee). Cf. Collins, 2000a, 53.

<sup>172</sup> Particularly after the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE. However, the Qumran scrolls as well as the Gospels attest for the ongoing debate about how the Temple should be administered during the turn of the millennium.

in all countries, better than the lawgivers of the Greeks and barbarians” and the law as “the most excellent and truly divine”.<sup>173</sup> Because of its divine nature, the law is “stamped with the seal of nature itself”.<sup>174</sup> Josephus depicts Moses as esteemed lawgiver who surpasses lawgiver such as Minos, Lycurgus<sup>175</sup>, Solon, Zaleucus, and Locrensis.<sup>176</sup> Moses is the oldest lawgiver wherefore he cannot have copied from others.<sup>177</sup> The Sibyl argues for her prophecies to be true in the same way, she has lived some time after the flood wherefore Homer has copied from her rather than the other way around.<sup>178</sup> The Mosaic Law exceeds all laws of other nations, be it that of Plato or the Stoics.<sup>179</sup> Moses was furthermore the teacher of the Greek philosophers.<sup>180</sup> Unlike other nations, all Jews are continuously educated in the law.<sup>181</sup> Josephus is careful to present a community that is identified by law and way of life rather than race and land.<sup>182</sup> Both, Philo and Josephus, stress the faithfulness to the law despite the many calamities that the Jews had faced in the past.<sup>183</sup> Jews would rather die than betray their law.<sup>184</sup> Living according to the law is εὐσεβεία.<sup>185</sup>

Josephus imagines theocracy<sup>186</sup> as the unique situation of the Jews that while being dispersed all over the world, are divinely ruled through the Mosaic Law.<sup>187</sup> For Josephus, the law contains the will of God (νόμον κατὰ θεοῦ βούλησιν)<sup>188</sup> and its fulfilment is acting according to his will. Accordingly, Josephus concludes, it would be impious not to act according to it (οὐδ’ εὐσεβὲς ἦν τοῦτον μὴ φυλάττειν). Therefore, the Jewish constitution

---

The date of the so-called Priestly Source (P) is much debated but some scholars date it to the exilic – post-exilic period because circumcision and the Shabbat laws as boundary markers of Israelite religion presuppose the exile experience (Witte, L. Schmidt, W.H. Schmidt). Furthermore, the Priestly Source read as an aetiology of the Jerusalem cult presupposes the existence of a functioning temple. The Priestly Source is believed to stem from priestly circles because it puts strong emphasis on the cultic laws. See also: Schmidt, 1993.

<sup>173</sup> Philo, Mos. 2.12.

<sup>174</sup> Philo, Mos. 2.14.

<sup>175</sup> The legendary lawgiver of the Spartans. The laws of Lycurgus were admired by many ancient political philosophers and they integrated aspects of them into their ideal societies. Josephus contrasts these laws, which were widely admired for their antiquity, with the laws of Moses, which had endured more than two thousand years (C. Ap. 2.23-25).

<sup>176</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.154; 161; 225.

<sup>177</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.156. Cf. Gerber, 1997, 261.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. lines 419-432.

<sup>179</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.154; 168-174.

<sup>180</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.281.

<sup>181</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.175.

<sup>182</sup> Lieu, 2004, 224.

<sup>183</sup> Philo, Mos. 2.15; Josephus, C. Ap. 2.228.

<sup>184</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.232-235.

<sup>185</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.144-146, 170-171, 180. Josephus does not define the term, however, he uses it in the sense of cultic rites and praxis pietatis (Gerber, 1997, 288-289 cf. Josephus, C. Ap. 1.161, 212, 224; 2.144, 282).

<sup>186</sup> The Greek term is explicitly coined by Josephus and isn't attested elsewhere in Ancient Greek literature. Cf. Gerber, 1997, 338.

<sup>187</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.164-165.

<sup>188</sup> Josephus, C. Ap. 2.184: Ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς πεισθεῖσιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τεθῆναι τὸν νόμον κατὰ θεοῦ βούλησιν οὐδ’ εὐσεβὲς ἦν τοῦτον μὴ φυλάττειν.



does not entail the rule of one person, a group of people or a state over others but rather the divine dominion.<sup>189</sup>

With regard to the Sibyl, the law is likewise depicted as the ideal law. Its ethical merits are described vividly and in contradiction to the customs of the Greeks and other nations.<sup>190</sup> Keeping the law is a safeguard for the survival of God's judgement and a life in God's manifested dominion on earth. The law will be the constitution of the divine dominion to come because it already is the ideal law. Eventually, the nations will acknowledge it as the most righteous (law) on earth (719-720). After judgement has come to pass, God will therefore complete the law to be a common law for all men (757-758). Here, the law becomes the ideal utopian law and defines the ideal utopian theocracy. Whereas Plato and Cicero portrayed the ideal city-state, the Sibyl reflects the ideal theocracy.<sup>191</sup> The Sibyl's ideal of a common law that applies to all nations goes hand in hand with the establishment of the divine dominion on earth. The ideal, or utopian part is the notion that at that time all people will adhere to the law. The law, as it is, is already perfect. Hence, it will be the ideal constitution for the ideal form of government, namely the divine dominion wherefore God will complete it to be a common law for all people. The only difference between the holy law and the common law is that the latter applies to everyone while the holy law was given exclusively to the people of God. The Sibyl exhibits the notion of an ideal utopian world under the 'ideal regime par excellence'<sup>192</sup>, the divine dominion.

### 11.3 God the great king who dwells in heaven

#### 11.3.1 Introduction: The image of God in Sib. Or. 3<sup>193</sup>

The perception of space in the Third Sibyl is more than mere geographical and cosmological knowledge of the world – the world itself becomes an image for the presence of God once the divine dominion is established on earth. This is particularly evident from the descriptions of judgement in which God intervenes in the course of nature and the transformation of the world at the end of the book. Until that God is imagined as dwelling in heaven. Although it is only stated explicitly once (807: θεὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν), it is evident from the observation that everything that God does is described as coming from above, from

---

<sup>189</sup> Cf. Gerber, 1997, 343.

<sup>190</sup> Sib. Or. 3.218-247, 573-600.

<sup>191</sup> Plato, Resp. 2.389-8.544; Cicero, Leg.

<sup>192</sup> Beavis, 2006, 52.

<sup>193</sup> For further reading on divine epithets in Jewish and Christian Literature of the Second Temple period and in the New Testament I recommend the extent study by Christiane Zimmermann (2007).

heaven, as a downward movement – a vertical line.<sup>194</sup> However, the vertical line is reciprocal inasmuch as it defines the relationship between God and the people. God requires of his people to adhere to his law and be an example for the rest of humankind. Once the wicked have been punished and the penitents have turned to God he will manifest his dominion on earth and take up residence in the “maiden” (787). The personification of the city as a maiden is a feature that is derived from biblical tradition.<sup>195</sup> The vertical line comes full circle at this point.

In this chapter the individual epithets that the Sibyl uses of God shall be analyzed against the background of the biblical texts and contemporary Hellenistic images of god(s) from which some of the descriptions the Sibyl uses are derived. Aside from the manner in which God's actions are described in the Third Sibyl (see commentary section), the manner in which he himself is described can shed light on the Sibyl's image of God, dominion, and space.

In her recent study, Lightfoot has examined how the Sibyl pictures God - which is the first study of the subject - and has noted that so far 'the Sibyl's teaching about God has been studied with surprising superficiality.'<sup>196</sup> In her book she provides a thorough appendix on divine epithets used in the Sibylline Oracles and elaborates on their Jewish and/or pagan background, which has been most helpful for my analysis.<sup>197</sup>

A few noteworthy descriptions of God are: God dwells in heaven (θεὸς οὐρανὸν οἰκῶν), is the creator (κτίστης), is the begetter (γενετήρ/γενέτης), is eternal (ἀέναιος), the most high (ὑψιστος), is king (βασιλεὺς/βασιλῆιον), is sovereign (μόναρχος), is great (μέγας), is holy (ἅγιος) and is righteous judge (δικαιοκρίτης) - just to name some of them. I will discuss the terms used to describe God individually before coming to the image of God as heavenly king which shall be the focus of this chapter.

### 11.3.2 The celestial God

#### 11.3.2.1 The heavenly God (οὐράνιος)

The Sibyl uses the epithet οὐράνιος repeatedly.<sup>198</sup> It occurs as an adjective (in the combination θεὸς οὐράνιος or οὐράνιος θεὸς respectively) and as a noun<sup>199</sup>, i.e. as a name for

<sup>194</sup> Cf. 174, 256, 286, 308, 373, 543 et al (God in heaven); 256, 308, 672, 691, 746, 800 (οὐρανόθεν - from heaven), 102 (ὑψόθεν - on high).

<sup>195</sup> Opposed to God's residence in heaven, there is also the depiction of the underworld in the shape of Hades although it is not always obvious whether the Sibyl speaks of the Greek god or the netherworld as such (lines 396, 461, 483). Note that in biblical tradition the netherworld is not part of God's creation either. This is probably due to a later development of that tradition. However, in Judaism the underworld never played a decisive role. It was not until the rise of Christianity that the concept of hell became an important theological concept.

<sup>196</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 24.

<sup>197</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 535-553.

<sup>198</sup> Lines, 174, 247, 280, 286.

God. ‘The Sibyl’s θεὸς οὐράνιος is not Homeric’<sup>200</sup> but it is used for the gods by Herodotus among others. According to LSJ οὐράνιος should be translated as ‘heavenly’, or ‘dwelling in heaven’.<sup>201</sup> In classical texts it is often used of either the gods in general or specific gods.<sup>202</sup> However, there is no other occurrence of the form in other pseudepigrapha albeit the idea that God resides in heaven. Bauckham notes that in the MT and often in later Jewish literature the expression ‘God of heaven’ is used by pagans, or Jews speaking to pagans, and suggests that the epithets in Sib. Or. 3 belong in this category.<sup>203</sup> In the Aramaic portions of Daniel, JHWH is “the most high”<sup>204</sup> as well as “God of heaven”<sup>205</sup>. According to Niehr, the two titles are synonyms and are ultimately derived from the Syrio-Canaanite Baalšamem.<sup>206</sup> Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine dating to the fifth century BCE attest for the title “Lord of heaven” for JHWH in communication addressed to non-Jews.<sup>207</sup>

The term ‘is not common in the LXX [...], but it corresponds to phrases such as θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Gen 24:3, 7)’<sup>208</sup>. In the LXX it can only be found in the later texts<sup>209</sup> which have no Hebrew *Vorlage*. Although the concept that God dwells in heaven is ancient and presupposed in the MT, the tendency to transcend the divine name is only visible from the Hellenistic age onwards. In Dan 4:23 (MT) ‘heavens’ is used as a substitute for the divine name. In the NT, on the other hand, οὐράνιος is particularly favoured by Matthew when he speaks of the heavenly father: ‘Damit dient „himmlisch“ zur Bezeichnung des "Raumes", in dem um Gottes Thron die Engel walten...’<sup>210</sup> In the Gospel according to Matthew the phrase ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος occurs particularly often<sup>211</sup> and is closely related to the notion of βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν which is uniquely used by Matthew.<sup>212</sup> The kingdom of God as perceived by Matthew is fundamentally different to the kingdoms of the earth.

---

<sup>199</sup> Lines 247, 280.

<sup>200</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 537.

<sup>201</sup> LSJ, “οὐράνιος”, 1094.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Aeschylus, Ag. 90; Prom. 166; Euripides, Heracl. 758; IG V 1.40; Herodotus, Hist. 6.56 (Ζεὺς οὐράνιος).

<sup>203</sup> Bauckham, 1993, 279.

<sup>204</sup> Dan 3:26, 32; 4:14, 21, 22, 29, 31; 5:18, 21; 7:18, 22, 25, 27.

<sup>205</sup> Dan 2:18, 19, 37, 44; 5:32.

<sup>206</sup> Niehr, 1990, 17-60, 62.

<sup>207</sup> Niehr, 1990, 45. Cf. CAP 27.15; 30.2, 15, 27-28; 31, 2, 26-27.

<sup>208</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 537.

<sup>209</sup> 1 Esd 6:14; 2 Macc 7:34; 9:10; 3 Macc 6:18; 4 Macc 4:11; 9:15; 11:3,

<sup>210</sup> H. Traub, “οὐράνιος“, TWNT 5:537.

<sup>211</sup> Matt 5:48; 6:14, 26, 32; 15:13; 18:35; 23:9; cf. Luke 2:13; Acts 26:19.

<sup>212</sup> Matt 3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10, 19-20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11-12; 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44-45, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 3-4, 23; 19:12, 14, 23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1.

The Sibyl likewise thinks of heaven as the place in which God dwells (807), wherefore she refers to him as the heavenly God. Furthermore, the designation οὐράνιος sets God apart from and over against the earthly rulers.<sup>213</sup>

The Sibyl uses the term οὐρανόθεν in a similar way to which she uses οὐράνιος.<sup>214</sup> In Homer οὐρανόθεν is often used in descriptions of the gods when they take action in the human world.<sup>215</sup> Outside the Sibylline Oracles the epithet has little prominence, with only one occurrence in 4 Macc 4:10, where it describes the inner heavenly space.<sup>216</sup> The term is particularly favoured by the Sibyl as it seems.<sup>217</sup> Chances are the LXX and other Jewish texts from the Hellenistic period avoid the term because it is strongly associated with the Olympian Gods as can be seen in the works of Homer. The usage of these two rather infrequent terms reflects the Sibyl's (imagined) pagan origin and her indebtedness to epic material.

The designation of God as heavenly or being in heaven is owed to a general tendency that can be observed in contemporary religion to classify one most high god of heaven that is superior to all others.<sup>218</sup> God in heaven, the heavenly God or God of heaven is beyond the realm of human reality. Whereas the destruction of a temple in antiquity implicitly meant killing the god to which the temple was devoted, the biblical God was transcended into heaven.<sup>219</sup> At the same time, the biblical God could be denationalized inasmuch as he could be proclaimed superior to 'dead idols' far from the homeland.<sup>220</sup>

### 11.3.2.2 The highest God (ὑψιστος)<sup>221</sup>

In Sib. Or. 3 ὑψιστος has four occurrences.<sup>222</sup> In line 519 a heavy blow is said to come upon the nations by the most high. The other three all deal with the law of the most high and the people's obedience.<sup>223</sup> The epithet ὑψιστος occurs numerous times in the LXX and Hellenistic Jewish writings and is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew עֶלְיוֹן.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Jdt 9:12. See also βασιλεύς below.

<sup>214</sup> Lines 308, 360, 672, 691, 746, 800.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Homer, Il. 1.195, 208; 8.19, 21, 365, 558; 11.184; 16.300; 17.545, 548; 21.199; 23.189; Od. 5.294; 6.281; 9.69, 145; 11.18; 12.315, 381; 20.31. Cf. Hesiod, Op. 242 (of Cronos).

<sup>216</sup> H. Traub, "οὐρανόθεν," TWNT 5:543. Cf. Gk. Apoc. Ezra 7.9.

<sup>217</sup> Sib. Or. 1.21, 79, 127, 165, 222; 2.38, 197, 202; 3.54, 308, 360, 672, 691, 746, 800; 4.57; 5.63, 158, 299; 8.218, 239, 243, 341, 458; 12.31, 197; 14.36, 159, 180, 234.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Zimmermann, 2007, 103.

<sup>219</sup> On the transformation and development of God in the Hebrew Bible see Köckert, 2005.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. Isa 44:6-9.

<sup>221</sup> A monotheistic cult of Theos Hypsistos may have existed in Asia Minor outside Judaism and Christianity. See: Michtell, 2010.

<sup>222</sup> Lines 519, 574, 580, 719.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. lines 547, 580, 719.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Zimmermann, 2007, 577f. Cf. Gen 14:20; Deut 32:8; 2 Sam 22:141; Esth 2:2; Tob 1:13; Ps 17:14; 45:5; 46:3; 77:35; 82:19; 86:5; 91:9; 96:9; Odes Sol. 2:8; 12:7; Sir. 12:6; 23:18; 34:19; 35:18; 42:18; Isa 57:15; Dan 4:24; Dan 9:4:2, 17, 25, 32; 5:18,21.

has 31 instances in the Hebrew Bible, whereby 30 refer to JHWH and only one to Canaanite deity.<sup>225</sup>

Ὑψιστος can also denote pagan gods which is evident from inscriptions from the first and second centuries CE.<sup>226</sup> The epithet ὕψιστος often occurs on inscriptions found in Asia Minor but whether they are of Jewish or pagan origin is often a matter of debate.<sup>227</sup> Mitchell notes that there is a visible tendency in Hellenistic Jewish literature for θεὸς ὕψιστος to be used by Jews when addressing pagans and ὕψιστος alone when used to designate the biblical God.<sup>228</sup> Chances are the Sibyl used ὕψιστος θεός to stress the fact that the Gentiles will recognise God over their (false) gods.<sup>229</sup> Ὑψιστος is also an epithet for Zeus.<sup>230</sup>

Zimmermann notes that the term ὕψιστος does not mark a spatial division but a hierarchical one.<sup>231</sup> According to Lightfoot, the same can be observed for the Sibylline corpus.<sup>232</sup> At the same time, the designation ὕψιστος corresponds to the idea of God dwelling in heaven which also makes him the most high in both senses. The epithet 'most high' denotes God's superiority over all other (so called) gods. Statements like God dwells on high, in heaven, from heaven, above etc. exhibit the idea very clearly. It is not a coincidence then that the Hebrew עליון originally derives from a spatial meaning (עלה = to go up). The hierarchical division between the human and the divine also always is a spatial division. The designation עליון is originally derived from a spatial meaning.

In the MT there is also a tendency to speak of עליון in confrontation with the enemy<sup>233</sup> or in reference to the disobedience of the Israelites towards the law.<sup>234</sup> It is logical then that the Sibyl uses ὕψιστος when she stresses faithfulness to God and the law. Greek Sirach also stresses the connection of the highest God and the law.<sup>235</sup> The Sibyl stays in line with these traditions when she speaks of ὕψιστος. In the MT it is also used in reference to God as the creator of heaven and earth<sup>236</sup> who rules the nations<sup>237</sup> and judges the entire earth.

<sup>225</sup> Niehr, 1990. 61. Cf. Gen 14:18, 19, 20, 22; Num 24:16; Deut 32:8; 2 Sa, 22:14; Isa 14:14; Ps 7:18; 9:3; 18:14; 21:8; 46:5; 47:3; 50:14; 57:3; 73:11; 77:11; 78:17, 35, 56; 83:19; 87:5; 91:1,9; 92:2; 97:9; 107:11; Lam 3:35,38.

<sup>226</sup> See the detailed study by Mitchell, 1999, 81-148, esp. 128-147 for references (293 inscriptions).

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Mitchell, 1999, 122ff.

<sup>228</sup> Mitchell, 1999, 110-111. Cf. Also Gen 14:18-22 LXX, Dan 3:93 LXX, Jos. Asen. 8:2, 15:12.

<sup>229</sup> In line 574 it might be used purely local.

<sup>230</sup> Pindar, Nem. 1.60, 11.2, Aeschylus, Eum. 28.

<sup>231</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 578ff.

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, 2007, 538.

<sup>233</sup> Num 24:16, 2 Kgs 22:14, Ps 9:3, 7:8, 17:14, 46:3f, 56:3ff, 82:19 LXX.

<sup>234</sup> Ps 72:11, 76:11, 77:17.35.36, 106:11 LXX.

<sup>235</sup> Sir 7:15; 9:15; 12:6; 17:26; 19:17; 23:18, 23; 24:2 et al.

<sup>236</sup> Cf. Gen 14:18ff.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Ps 46:3.

In the LXX ὑψιστος also signifies the most high above all other gods in over against polytheism.<sup>238</sup> In the Third Sibyl, God is likewise the creator of all other gods.<sup>239</sup> Philo uses the epithet only when quoting the LXX and specifically to communicate the Jewish God to the Gentiles while at the same time he is careful to avoid the title in front of his Gentile readership due to its polytheistic implications.<sup>240</sup> The God of the Sibyl is not a personal God who has an emotional bond with his people. Rather than the moral aspect, the Sibyl focuses on his celestial attributes.<sup>241</sup> The spatial and the hierarchical aspects thereby go hand in hand.

### 11.3.3 The sovereign God and the imperial cult in the first century BCE and BC

The depiction of God as sovereign king is the predominant metaphor of God in the Third Sibyl. The Sibyl uses the depiction of God as king over against the Gentile kings. By the first century CE, when the main corpus of the Third Sibylline Oracle was written, Rome was on the verge of becoming an empire the likes of which the world had not seen before.<sup>242</sup> Later editors continued this notion by adding further prophecies against Rome in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.<sup>243</sup> The Sibyl's focus on unruly human dominion is visible throughout the entire book. Not only will God thwart the earthly kingdoms, he is also elevated above the human kings (and the Greek gods) in any respect. The Sibyl reduces the Titans to mere human kings who brought war into the world. The Greeks kings, who regard themselves as descendents of the Titans, are depicted as warmongers. Their Roman successors continued war and oppression. The Sibyl therefore depicts God as the true sovereign through his actions (the giving of the law, the manifestation of his dominion on earth) as well as his attributes and epithets. Divine epithets are a powerful tool to demonstrate God's power over against earthly ruler or other gods. The Sibyl uses royal titles as well as epithets of Zeus and other gods to set the one God apart and above all others. She even creates new epithets such as μόναρχος.

By the Graeco-Roman era rulers were often venerated as gods and cults were initiated on their behalf. The ruler cult served political as well as a religious purposes. When Rome became an empire, Julius Caesar, after his death in 48 BCE, was deified and so was Augustus after 29 BCE.<sup>244</sup> The latter was often depicted with the attributes of Apollo.<sup>245</sup> In the Greek

<sup>238</sup> Ps 97:9; 83:19; 50:1.

<sup>239</sup> Sib. Or. 3.278.

<sup>240</sup> Cf. Zimmermann, 2007, 583.

<sup>241</sup> Although the Jewish law, which ultimately derives from God, is repeatedly depicted as morally superior.

<sup>242</sup> 'When we speak of the Roman Empire it is a play on words. Empire - imperium - suggests first of all a domination, a hegemony, the outcome of a conquest, or a successful diplomacy. The Romans did have such an empire while still a 'free Republic', that is, before they had an emperor' (Nicolet, 1991, 15).

<sup>243</sup> Cf. lines 324-336, 350-380 and comments there.

<sup>244</sup> Cf. Cassius Dio, Hist. 51.20.7.

east temples and altars were dedicated to Augustus and several inscriptions attest that he was labeled a god during his lifetime.<sup>246</sup> Coins depict Augustus sitting on a throne holding a scepter and a Victoria on a globe.<sup>247</sup> Romans and locals alike attest for their relation to the divine emperor.<sup>248</sup> Gaius (Caligula) referred to himself as *Optimus Maximus Caesar* thus identifying himself with Jupiter for whom the title *Optimus Maximus* was reserved.<sup>249</sup> Consequently, Gaius possessed heavenly blood (*caelestis sanguis*)<sup>250</sup> and divine majesty (*divina maiestas*)<sup>251</sup>. Both Philo and Josephus record the reaction of Jews all over the world when Gaius tried to install his image in the temple to be worshipped as a god, which was only averted by his assassination.<sup>252</sup> By the first century CE the emperor's reign was considered eternal (*aeternus*).<sup>253</sup> For the Sibyl, only God and his dominion are eternal.<sup>254</sup> In the Hellenistic conscious Euhemerus' notion that the gods of old were but deified mortal kings remained a minor opinion.<sup>255</sup> The imperial cult was widespread in the east and in Asia Minor in particular.<sup>256</sup> The Sibyl, being a text from the Diaspora, holds God against and above the Roman claims to divinity.

#### 11.3.4 The sole ruler (μόναρχος)

Along with κτίστης (creator) in line 704<sup>257</sup>, God is also the righteous judge (δικαιοκρίτης) and sovereign ruler (μόναρχος). The ruler is also the judge. Nonetheless the terms are unusual in contemporary descriptions of God. δικαιοκρίτης is a syncrisis of δίκαιος (righteous) and κρίτης (judge) while μόναρχος is a syncrisis of μόνος (only) and ἀρχός (ruler, initiator). The syncrisis elevates God above mortal rulers who can also be judges. However, God is the sole ruler and the righteous judge which cannot be said of human rulers.

The terms μόναρχος and μοναρχία are Greek neologisms that correspond to τύραννος and τυραννίς respectively.<sup>258</sup> The latter are usually avoided in Judeo-Christian literature because of their negative connotation. Furthermore, τυραννίς is used as a royal epithet of Zeus.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>245</sup> Cf. Clauss, 1999, 64. Cf. Pliny the Elder, Nat. 34.18.43.

<sup>246</sup> IGR 4:201. Cf. sources and discussion in Price, 1985, 54ff.

<sup>247</sup> RPC 1:221-224.

<sup>248</sup> Mitchell, 1995, 1:103.

<sup>249</sup> Clauss, 1999, 91. Cf. Suetonius, Aug. 94.1-7; Cal. 22.1-4; Philo, Legat. 188. Another critical opinion is recorded by Seneca, Ira 1.20.8-9.

<sup>250</sup> Tacitus, Ann. 4.52.2.

<sup>251</sup> Suetonius, Cal. 22.3.

<sup>252</sup> Philo, Flacc. 43-46; Legat. 203; Josephus, B.J. 2.168, 195.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. Siculus, 4.144 (on Gaius); RIC 2.61 n. 384 (Vespasian); RIC 1.130 n. 297 (Titus).

<sup>254</sup> Lines 698, 767.

<sup>255</sup> Cf. Pliny the Elder, Nat. 2.19. See also comments on Section I.

<sup>256</sup> Cf. Michtell, 1995; Price, 1985.

<sup>257</sup> See there for comment.

<sup>258</sup> Barceló, 1993, 105.

<sup>259</sup> Aeschylus, Prom. 10.

Despite the correspondence of *monarchia* and *tyranni* in early Greek literature, *monarchia* turned into a positive concept in later writings. Xenophon, for instance, describes Cyrus as a positive monarch who has but the best intentions. Based on this, Cicero portrayed Cyrus as the virtues and ideal ruler.<sup>260</sup> The rise of Macedonia probably caused a rethinking of the term *monarchia* so that by the Sibyl's time the term had a fully positive connotation. In Jewish texts the term μόναρχος is unusual although Philo speaks of the concept of μοναρχία.<sup>261</sup> Μοναρχία, on the other hand, is a common term.<sup>262</sup>

There are but a few occurrences of the term μόναρχος in classical literature and a few disparate ones are to be found on inscriptions.<sup>263</sup> In the latter case it can refer to God. There is one occurrence in 3 Macc 2:2 where it appears in a chain of epithets (Κύριε, Κύριε, βασιλεῦ τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ δέσποτα πάσης τῆς κτίσεως, ἅγιε ἐν ἁγίοις, μόναρχε, παντοκράτωρ). The combination of Gods kingship and his creative aspect serves to differentiate him from the threatening earthly kings<sup>264</sup> and to demonstrate his obvious superiority over them. In frg. 1.7 of the Sibylline Oracles the phrase εἷς θεός, μόνος ἄρχει occurs in a list of other divine epithets. The formula εἷς θεός is a common one in Jewish, Christian, and pagan sources in late antiquity.<sup>265</sup> As far as the dating and the position of the fragments<sup>266</sup> is concerned it cannot be said with certainty whether they belong to the ending of Book 2 or the beginning of Book 3 and it is beyond the scope of this study to go into that discussion.<sup>267</sup> In light of the Hebrew Bible (and the LXX respectively) and later kingship metaphors, God in the Third Sibyl has his residence in heaven until he will erect his kingdom on earth.

Two other epithets occur in line 704. God is called κτίστης ὁ δικαιοκρίτης τε μόναρχος, creator, righteous judge and sovereign. These epithets sum up the three aspects that have the most importance for the Sibyl. God created the world and therefore he is judge and sovereign over his creation. The three attributes complement one another. The legal description of God

<sup>260</sup> Cf. Cicero, Quint. frat. 1.1.23.

<sup>261</sup> First in Artapanus (Praep. Ev. 9.27.5); occurs among other divine epithets that stress God's sovereignty in a prayer by the high priest Simon in 3 Makk 2.2. Philo stresses God's μοναρχία in contrast to Polytheism (cf. Philo, Her. 169; Decal. 31, 154; Spec. 2.224). It reflects a Stoic background where the universe is governed by a single principle (cf. Cleanthes, Hymn to Zeus, 7-8). It is not an epithet of Zeus or used by Homer (Lightfoot, 2007, 542). Cf. Sib. Or. fr. i 17; Sib. Or. Or. 3.11 (εἷς θεός ἐστι μόναρχος).

<sup>262</sup> Cf. Herodotus, Hist. 3.82; Aeschylus, Sept, 883; Sophocles, Ant. 1163; Euripides, Suppl. 352 et al.

<sup>263</sup> On most of the inscriptions that I was able to find it was either a personal name or an epithet for a priest. However, there is one Christian inscription from Pamphylia that speaks of Constantine (BCH 7.1883.266,9).

<sup>264</sup> Camponovo, 1984, 197.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Deut 6:4; Mal 2:10; Zech 14:9; IJO II 236; Ps-Orph. 8 (Urfassung)/10 (rec. A); Ps.-Phoc. 54; Clemens, Strom. 6.5.39.2; Ps.-Clem., Hom. 1.74; Mark 2:7ff; 10:17ff; 12:28ff; 1 Cor 8:4ff; Gal 3:20; Rom 3:29f; Eph 4:5f; 1 Tim 2:5; Jas 2:19; 4:12. Zimmermann notes that since there is only three instances of εἷς as an attribute for JHWH in the LXX. She concludes that the usage of the εἷς θεός formula in Judeo-Christian literature was inspired by Greek philosophy (Zimmermann, 2007, 546). Cf. also Zimmermann, 2007, 533-553 for Jewish and pagan examples and 553-568 for NT examples.

<sup>266</sup> Preserved in Theophilus, Autol. 2.36 around 180 CE.

<sup>267</sup> See Gauger, 1998, 439; Buitenwerf, 2003, 65-91, 144.



is mirrored by his actions; throughout the book he appears as the one passing judgement on the nations from above. At the same time, the Sibyl takes great interest in the history of the world but throughout the course of history is controlled and governed by God. Ruling and judging are commonly understood to be two aspects of the same activity. The king was in other words also the judge.<sup>268</sup> As Nikiprowetzky put it: 'Jusqu'à la fin the temps, le monde reste à la fois la scène de l'histoire et l'exécuteur de la justice de Dieu...'<sup>269</sup>

God is proclaimed μόνος δυνάστης by the converted Gentiles in line 718. Both lines stress the sovereignty of God. The theme of rule (ἀρχή/ἄρχω) is an important and recurring one in the Third Sibyl and is often used in reference to the nations. God, who is the true ruler, stands over against the nations.

The image of God as initiator in the Greek language also echoes in the semantic field of the term ἀρχή since it means both "to begin" and "to rule".<sup>270</sup> Seen in this light the Sibyl persists on the view that God is not only κτίστης or ἀρχός, as could be said of any Greek figure, but he is κτίστης and μόναρχος. The Sibyl thoroughly demonstrates God's power over against the false Greek gods and any human ruler for that matter. This is also evident from her portrayal of God as king (see below). The attribution of the epithet μόναρχος sets the Jewish God apart from and over above all human rulers.<sup>271</sup>

### 11.3.5 God as king (βασιλεύς)

Lightfoot notes that the image of God as king is especially characteristic of the Third Sibyl.<sup>272</sup> The kingship of God is one of the most important divine qualities in the Third Book. The decisive question throughout the book is how God's heavenly kingship relates to human kingship on earth. The Sibyl is of the conviction that human kingdoms are transitory while God's dominion is perpetual (767). The erection of God's dominion on earth towards the end of the book raises the question how it relates to his dominion in heaven.

The idea of God as king can already be found in the Hebrew Bible and is an ancient near-eastern commonplace. In the Hebrew Bible it is the predominant relational metaphor of God: human kingship mirrors divine kingship and vice versa.<sup>273</sup> The image of God as king in the Hebrew Bible – especially in Psalms<sup>274</sup> – was crucial for the Jerusalem Cult. Unlike in other

<sup>268</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 3:28; T. Mos. 2:2; Ezek. Trag. 1:86; Tg. Ps.-J. 110:4-7; 2 Bar 61:3.

<sup>269</sup> Nikiprowetzky, 1970, 74.

<sup>270</sup> Cf. Zimmermann, 2007, 357.

<sup>271</sup> Cf. Sib. Or. 3.121, 167, 175, 177, 290, 400, 560, 608, 610, 660, 638, 743, 784.

<sup>272</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 540.

<sup>273</sup> Cf. Zimmermann, 2007, 272f. It should be noted that in the ANE it was believed that the king's power came from God and that his court was arranged according to the heavenly court while in fact it was the other way around. The institution is divine (and has descended from heaven) but is transferred to the human realm.

<sup>274</sup> Cf. Ps LXX 9:37; 23:7f; 28:10; 43:5; 73:12.

ancient Near Eastern cultures, however, the Israelite kings - at least in the way the bible portrays them - were not divinized. In the Hebrew Bible, God, being creator of heaven and earth, is simultaneously king of the world and king of the other Gods.<sup>275</sup> In the MT God's kingship is repeatedly mentioned but particularly in the so-called enthronement psalms (Ps 93-100).<sup>276</sup> In 2 Kgs 19:15 God is addressed as the one who is enthroned (καθήμενος - literally: sitting) above the Cherubim and in Isa 6:1 the prophet is able to see God enthroned on his throne which is probably a reference to the temple as is evident from the references to the house (ὁ οἶκος) in the second half of the verse.<sup>277</sup> In Dan 5:18-21 (LXX) the earthly kingdom is represented as divinely given wherefore God rules the human kingdom as well. In contrast to human dominion the βασιλεία of God is eternal (Dan 6:27 LXX).<sup>278</sup>

The theme of God's kingship is carried on by the pseudepigrapha and the Qumran texts.<sup>279</sup> Since the discovery of the Songs of the Shabbat Sacrifice (11Q17 and 4Q400-407) at Qumran a shift can be observed in modern scholarship regarding the kingship of God.<sup>280</sup> In the Shabbat Songs JHWH is referred to as מלך 55 times. The Songs can be dated to approximately 150-50 BCE and exhibit closeness to Dan 3:52-90 and psalms such as Ps 103:19-20.<sup>281</sup> Their approximate date is close to that of the Third Sibyl. In the so called Pseudepigrapha to the MT (and in the Qumran texts for that matter), the king metaphor gained more and more importance. The reasons for this probably lie within the social and political position of the Jews during the Hellenistic age, especially during the so-called Antiochian persecution and the Maccabean revolt. In the book of Daniel, Tobit, and Judith, God is singled out as great king over the foreign human kings via the means of terminology.<sup>282</sup> The superior kingship of God is also 'the principal metaphor for God in 1 Enoch, and is sometimes literalised in visions of him sitting on his throne ...'<sup>283</sup> In other pseudepigrapha the superlative of the king terminology is also found and often appears in context of prayers.<sup>284</sup> The expressions μέγας βασιλεύς and βασιλεὺς βασιλέων are derived from Persian royal ideology. Both titles occur in the LXX in reference to God and Gentile kings alike. In Dan 4:37 (LXX) it becomes evident

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Ps 94:3. ὅτι θεὸς μέγας κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς θεοὺς.

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Exod 15:18; 1 Chr 16:31; Ps 9:37; 23:7f; 28:10; 43:5; 73:12. See, Camponovo, 1984, 392. Detailed account by Janowski, 1993.

<sup>277</sup> εἶδον τὸν κύριον καθήμενον ἐπὶ θρόνου ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἐπηρμένον, καὶ πλήρης ὁ οἶκος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. Cf. Rev 4:2-3; 7:15; 21:5.

<sup>278</sup> See also above: The divine dominion in related literature (the book of Daniel).

<sup>279</sup> Tob 1:18; 10:14; Jdt 9:12; 3 Macc 2:2; 2:9.13; 5:33; 13:4. 1QM XIV, 16; XIX, 1; 1QHab XVIII, 10; XXVI, 9; 1Q20 X, 10 et al.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. The crucial publication by Hengel/Schwemer, 1991.

<sup>281</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 276.

<sup>282</sup> Cf. Dan 5:18 θ, 21 θ, 6:27 θ; Tob 1:18 S, 10:14 S, 13:2ff; Jdt 2:5 et al.

<sup>283</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 540. Cf. 1 En. 9:4; 18:8.

<sup>284</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 277.

that God is superior to the human king (in this case: Nebuchadnezzar) because he is θεὸς τῶν θεῶν καὶ κύριος τῶν κυρίων καὶ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλέων.<sup>285</sup> In the prayer of Tobit (Tobit 13) God is called βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων (13:7) and ὁ θεὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ μεγὰς (13:16). The references in Tobit are reminiscent of what we find in the Sibyl's hymn of the penitent in lines 716ff, especially 717 (see comments there). In 3 Macc 2:2 God is addressed as βασιλεὺ τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ δέσποτα πάσης τῆς κτίσεως, ἅγιε ἐν ἁγίοις, μόναρχε, παντοκράτωρ. The evidence leads to the assumption that these epithets were common in contemporary prayer. In all of these instances God, like the Persian Great King, seems to be more and more remote and unapproachable so that he becomes more majestic.<sup>286</sup> The Sibyl does not, however, use the famous βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλέων formula that can be found in the LXX.<sup>287</sup> Instead she uses the likewise famous formula βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων<sup>288</sup> in a slightly diverged form when she calls him ἀθάνατον βασιλῆα, θεὸν μέγαν ἀέναόν τε (717). A central aspect of God's kingship in all of these texts is the fact that he is king against the kings of the earth in as much as he surpasses and overcomes their power.<sup>289</sup>

For the Sibyl the topos of God's kingship is of special importance because it is her goal to demonstrate God's universal dominion over and above the hubristic human kings. The Sibyl takes this to the extreme when she has the Gentiles confess the universal and uncontested dominion of God. Whereas the Hebrew Bible is convinced that God is enthroned in heaven and that the temple is his palace the Jewish texts from the Hellenistic Age predominantly represent God as a saviour of the Jewish people in contrast to the human kings of the nations.<sup>290</sup> This is largely owed to the historical circumstances. The Hellenistic and Roman era was dominated by the absolutistic claims of their respective kings whereas Judaism was (for the most part) without a king and many Jews lived in the Diaspora. Especially in times of war and persecution hopes for divine intervention or a saviour king were at large.

In order to determine the understanding of the term βασιλεὺς, a look at the usage of βασιλεὺς in classical Greek is in order. The hegemony of a βασιλεὺς (king) in the Homeric epics was legitimised through his relation to Zeus. Even though the Homeric Mount Olympus mirrors human society, Homer never uses the term βασιλεὺς for Zeus or any other god. The

<sup>285</sup> Cf. Ezek 26:7 (of Nebuchadnezzar); Ezra 7:12 (of Ataxerxes); Dan 2:37 (of Nebuchadnezzar); 2 Macc 13:4; 3 Macc 3:35. It should be noted that only in Ezek 26:7, Ezra 7:12, and Dan 2:37 we have a Hebrew counterpart for the expression king of kings. These are the only three instances of the formula in the MT. It is curious that in the MT the expression refers to human kings, namely Nebuchadnezzar and Ataxerxes. Only in the LXX the title is transferred unto God.

<sup>286</sup> Müller, 1991, 40. Cf. Herodotus, Hist. 1.98.99.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. 2 Macc 13:4; 3 Macc 5:35; Dan 4:37;

<sup>288</sup> Tob 13:7, 11; Dan 2:4; 1 Enoch 9:4; 12:3; 25:3; 25:5, 7; 27:3.

<sup>289</sup> Cf. Müller, 1991, 41.

<sup>290</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 278. Cf. Dan, Jdt; 2 and 3 Macc; Pss. Sol.

title is reserved for human heroes.<sup>291</sup> According to Sthenidas in his pseudo-Pythagorean work *Περὶ βασιλείας* (On kingship)<sup>292</sup> the king is imitator of the first god who was also the first king. While god rules the universe, the king rules over mankind. God rules perpetually while the king's reign is temporal. God reigns by nature while the king rules is legitimised by birth, imitation, and emulation. God rules through wisdom and the king rules through acquired scientific knowledge (ἐπιστήμη).

Hesiod, on the other hand, occasionally uses βασιλεύς to designate Zeus.<sup>293</sup> In Hesiod's *Theogony* Zeus is the elected King of the Gods<sup>294</sup> and assigned the various gods their roles. The reason why Homer does not refer to Zeus or any other god as βασιλεύς probably is that kingship in Ancient Greece played a minor role up until the Persian conquest through Cyrus the Great whom Herodotus called μεγὰς βασιλεύς or βασιλεὺς βασιλέων in light of Persian royal ideology. As we have seen, both titles occur in the LXX in reference to God and Gentile kings alike. The usage of the βασιλεύς terminology did not increase until the Hellenistic Age and the conquest of Alexander. From thereon in Zeus is referred to as βασιλεύς by several authors<sup>295</sup>, occasionally even as μεγὰς βασιλεύς<sup>296</sup>. Not long after Alexander the Great had inquired the oracle of Ammon which had informed him about his divine origin, he sacrificed to Ζεὺς βασιλεύς in Memphis<sup>297</sup>, which was really a celebration of himself rather than Zeus.<sup>298</sup> Ζεὺς βασιλεύς is also found on inscriptions.<sup>299</sup> The image of Zeus as a king ultimately derived from the social reality of the Persian and Hellenistic periods and the Great Kings. Greek authors also share the idea that kingship has a strongly ethical component. Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40-120 CE), for instance, has a very ethical concept of the kingship of Zeus. Zeus is the only god that is called βασιλεύς because of his dominion and power and he is also father because of his charity<sup>300</sup> and hence he is an example for kings and all humans who are in a powerful position. He concludes that all kings of the Greeks and the Barbarians who ever had a right to carry that title are students and followers of this god.<sup>301</sup> This is not so unlike what we have observed about the 'sons of God' in Jewish literature.<sup>302</sup> According to Dio,

---

<sup>291</sup> Barceló, 1993, 60.

<sup>292</sup> Preserved in Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 4.7.63. Texts under the same title by Diotogenes and Ecphantus are closely related to it.

<sup>293</sup> Cf. Hesiod, *Theog.* 886; *Op.* 667.

<sup>294</sup> Hesiod, *Theog.* 881-886.

<sup>295</sup> *Ps.-Plat. Ep.* 2.312C; *Diodorus Siculus*, 3.56.5.

<sup>296</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 2.75; *Or.* 2.75; *SEG VIII* 32.

<sup>297</sup> Arrian, *Anab.* 3.5.29.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. Müller, 1991, 36.

<sup>299</sup> *SEG* 6.115-117; 8.32; 30.1428

<sup>300</sup> Dio, *Or.* 1.39.40 = 12.75.

<sup>301</sup> Dio, *Or.* 36.32.

<sup>302</sup> See excursus on lines 702-9.

Alexander gets a rather cynical answer to the question whether he is a son of Zeus. According to Dio every man is a son of Zeus if he is to be found worthy.<sup>303</sup> Whereas during the Persian reign the term βασιλεύς was solely used of the barbarian king it was adapted into the Hellenistic empire of Alexander the Great and his successors who were all βασιλεῖς. In the Roman world the term grew so popular that it eventually replaced the royal title αὐτοκράτωρ.<sup>304</sup> Although βασιλεύς is used of the Greek gods, the Sibyl's depiction of God as king is in fact closer to the LXX because in both God is anonymous.<sup>305</sup>

The combination βασιλεὺς μέγας or μέγας βασιλεύς is also a common epithet in Jewish as well as pagan literature, is. Already the MT stresses the difference between the heavenly and the human king.<sup>306</sup> Hence no Israelite king is attributed as great (גדל). However, even the references to God as great king are rare, which is probably owed to the pagan character of the expression. In the Hellenistic age, μέγας βασιλεύς was a title that was attributed to most kings, most prominently Alexander the Great. However, already the Persians referred to the kings as Great kings although the title βασιλεὺς βασιλέων soon became more popular in Persian royal ideology. The identity of the Hellenistic monarchs led to a contrasting between them and the Jewish/Christian God.<sup>307</sup> In Jewish texts from the Second Temple period βασιλεὺς μέγας as a name for God<sup>308</sup> can be found in the LXX<sup>309</sup> and in 1 Enoch<sup>310</sup>. In the book of Judith Nebuchadnezzar is also referred to as βασιλεύς μεγάλος.<sup>311</sup> Nevertheless, God is singled out as the superior power over against the earthly kings.<sup>312</sup> The Sibyl describes God as θεὸς μέγας βασιλεύς (499, 616), βασιλεὺς μέγας (560), ἀθάνατος βασιλεύς, θεὸς μέγας ἀέναιος τε (117) in order to differentiate him from the worldly kings.

The Sibyl uses the term βασιλεύς 26 times whereof four instances refer to God and the rest to human kings respectively. The term first occurs in the account of the Titanomachy where it refers to the three sons of Uranus, namely Titan, Cronus and Iapethos (124) of which the latter is then made king (127). It has long been observed that the Titanomachy is a euhemeristic account and that the Sibyl views the Titans as merely deified kings. Already in the writings of Homer political elites, which is how in terms of Homer a βασιλεύς was defined, would trace their genealogy back to the gods which served their own self-identity as

<sup>303</sup> Dio, Or. 4.21-23.

<sup>304</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 282.

<sup>305</sup> Lightfoot, 2007, 541.

<sup>306</sup> Although in the royal psalms human and divine kingship tend to overlap. Cf. Ps 2; 45; 110.

<sup>307</sup> Cf. Müller, 1991, 37ff.

<sup>308</sup> Not of God: Jdt 3:2 (of Nebuchadnezzar); Eccl 9:14; Dan 14:41.

<sup>309</sup> Ps 46:3; 94:3; 135:17; Tob 13.16; Pss. Sol. 2.32; Mal 1:14.

<sup>310</sup> 1 En. 84:4

<sup>311</sup> Jdt 2:5.

<sup>312</sup> Jdt 9:12: βασιλεὺ πάσης κτίσεώς σου.

well as their claims to power.<sup>313</sup> According to Homer, human kingship was established by Zeus.<sup>314</sup> Accordingly, the Sibyl traces the Greek kings back to the Titans (403) and accuses them of trusting in false leaders and dead idols (545-550). By way of contrast, God is referred to as immortal king (ἄθάνατος βασιλεύς) by the Sibyl. In the mind of the Sibyl, the Greek gods are not immortal. Instead they are merely dead idols made by the hands of men (545, 606)<sup>315</sup> powerless over against the immortal king (see also comment on ἄθάνατος below).

Nonetheless, the Sibyl's king that will come from Asia to ravage Egypt is also a βασιλεὺς μέγας (611). Here too the Sibyl adapts the imagery of the Hellenistic kings who assumed the title ὁ μέγας (the most prominent example being Alexander). The Asian king is the only human king in the Third Sibyl to be referred to as βασιλεὺς μέγας. This is not entirely out of tune with what Hellenistic Judaism thought about human and divine kingship as we have seen. However, the Sibyl also makes it clear that God is the true king a few lines below.<sup>316</sup>

The Sibyl uses the combination of βασιλεύς and μέγας particularly often (499, 560, 616, and 717). The repeated usage of the term βασιλεύς and the βασιλ- root in the Third Sibyl may be explained by the emphasis the third book puts on the topos of human kingdoms and their respective reigns over against the kingship of God. In contrast to the haughty kingdoms of men<sup>317</sup>, God is represented as the sole sovereign ruler of the world who will overthrow the kingdoms of men and establish his heavenly kingdom on earth at the end of time. 'Die Ankündigung des größten Königreichs in den Sib ist mit der Betonung der umfassenden und ewigen Herrschaft Gottes als Aufnahme römischer politischer Propaganda zu verstehen [...] und ist verbunden mit dem Gericht des unsterblichen Gottes und großen Königs...'.<sup>318</sup> The tendency to cloak God in the guise of a king above all kings is evoked by the historical circumstances of the Hellenistic and Roman eras where the respective kings claimed absolute and universal rule. Over against this stands the 'oracular opposition'<sup>319</sup> of the Third Sibyl and her contemporaries, and the belief in a God who will save his people and judge the unruly kings. In the Third Sibyl, God is repeatedly referred to as the Great King (βασιλεὺς μέγας: 499, 569, 616) to sharply contrast the king of men and their kingdoms which will all come to an end.

<sup>313</sup> Barceló, 1993, 57. Cf. Homer, Il. 6.150ff.

<sup>314</sup> Homer, Il. 2.203ff.

<sup>315</sup> Cf. Deut 4:28; 28:36, 64; 2 Chr 23:19; Dan 5:23.

<sup>316</sup> Θεὸς μέγας βασιλεύς (616).

<sup>317</sup> 203, 451, 552

<sup>318</sup> Zimmermann, 2007, 277.

<sup>319</sup> The term is derived from Eddy, 1961. It should be noted though that Eddy's idea of a pan-oriental anti-Hellenism is a bit of a generalisation and needs to be revised especially in light of the Egyptian evidence that has been uncovered since. Cf. Schipper/Blasius, 2006, 295-302. See also the discussion on the Cologne Papyrus (comments on 608-623).

Philo likewise opposes the earthly kings with the rule of God. God's royal dominion is to serve as a good example for the human kings. Hence God punishes those who claim godlike dominion and demonstrates who the true king is by ousting them from power.<sup>320</sup> Philo topples the principle of royal ideology that the king is also a god and turns it around by stating that God is also a king<sup>321</sup> and that he is the ideal king. In light of Persian royal ideology Philo compares God to the Persian Great King.<sup>322</sup> Platonism and the traditional image of the majesty of the king of kings have converged in Philo's image of God.<sup>323</sup>

Again, it could be argued that the Sibyl was taking part in or picking up on a widespread debate inasmuch as the assessment of rulers was dependent on the current political situation and their esteemed worthiness. While Wis 6:18-21 grants kingship to human rulers as long as they seek wisdom, God in the Third Sibyl is the only true βασιλεύς and the hubristic human kings are all doomed to fall.

### 11.3.6 Conclusion

The Sibyl uses images and terminology associated with the Greek gods<sup>324</sup>, the imperial cult, and the LXX. The Sibyl describes God's actions in terms of those of the Greek Gods (οὐρανόθεν) while at the same time God surpasses the Olympians (μόναρχος). The Sibyl uses her material freely and is not afraid to cloak God in the guise of an Olympian god in order to show that only he has the powers commonly attributed to them such as their immortality.

Although in many instances she stays in line with what we know about God from the LXX, she also has a unique way of describing God. The image of God as sovereign, as sole ruler, as Great king seems to be the most important in her portrayal and cannot simply be derived from the LXX. The idea that there is only one God to be worshipped who is superior to all echoes in all of her descriptions of God. At the end of the book, the heavenly king will establish his dominion on earth transforming it into a utopian, paradisiacal state.

---

<sup>320</sup> Cf. Umemoto, 1991, 255.

<sup>321</sup> Philo, Legat. 149.

<sup>322</sup> Philo, Dec. 60.61.

<sup>323</sup> Müller, 1991, 39.

<sup>324</sup> Another aspect recurring in the Third Sibyl is that of God as controller of the elements. He controls the storms in the Tower of Babel narrative which then destroy the tower on high (102), and causes earthquakes in which case epithets of Poseidon are used: σεισχύθονος (405), ἐνοσίχθονος (408), and ἐννοσίγαιος (405). Cf. Buitenwerf, 2003, 229f. Cf. Homer, Il. 7.445; Hesiod, Theog. 104, 818. The idea of God causing earth-quakes is common in the MT and is associated with theophanies.

In lines 713-14 the nations on the islands and cities realise that everything helps the sons of the great God, even the heavens, the sun, and the moon (οὐρανὸς ἡέλιός [...] ἡδὲ σελήνη). The fact that even the celestial elements aid the pious shows that God is truly on their side as these things belong to the divine sphere: the celestial elements stand over against the earthly realities (namely the cities and islands). The support of the cosmos shows that the heavenly forces are juxtaposed with the earthly forces and that the heavenly ones are represented as superior over the earthly ones. It is evident that God is considered master of these elements.

It is essential to her image of God that he dwells in heaven – not in the temple.<sup>325</sup> This is well in line with other texts from the Second Temple period which also have transcended God. While God is described as reigning from heaven throughout the book, he will establish his dominion on earth and dwell in the ‘maiden’ perpetually.<sup>326</sup> Although the original basis in the Hebrew Bible for this image is the idea that a new temple will be built in which God will dwell, in the Third Sibyl the case is more complex. The maiden in the Third Sibyl has become a metaphor for the entire earth and God’s presence in it. God’s dominion on earth is a metaphor for his presence. Up until the manifestation of the divine dominion on earth God directed the earthly events from heaven. However, through his very presence on earth it will be transformed physically. The Gates of the Blessed (i.e. the gates of heaven) will be opened so that there will be no more boundary between heaven and earth. Earth will then possess all the traditional features of biblical and classical utopias. Here, the Sibyl partakes in the shared knowledge of the ancient world. In the end, however, the fixed border between the human and divine spheres will be removed for good.

Throughout the book God is depicted as dwelling in heaven. Accordingly, his actions are described as coming from heaven. There is a natural physical divide between the human world and the divine that is removed at the end of the book. When this border is removed the world will be transformed into a utopian state. The paradisiacal conditions recall a Garden of Eden setting as well as images of classical utopias. All of this signifies that in the eschaton God will be present in the world and provide the peaceful conditions. The Sibyl’s image of God and his dominion may shed light on some later Jewish and Christian texts that pick up on the concept of “kingdom of heaven” or “kingdom of God”.

---

<sup>325</sup> See comment on lines 772-776.

<sup>326</sup> See comment on lines 785-787a.



### 11.4 Conclusion: The Images of Space in the Third Sibylline Oracle

In the Third Sibyl the manifestation of the divine dominion is the realisation of the ideal utopian state. Whereas throughout the book the relationship of God and man was constituted by the reciprocal vertical line and a fixed border between human and divine, the demarcations between humankind and God will be nullified at the end of days. In order to bring about Utopia, the people of God are required to keep the law and be moral guides for all mankind so that eventually the nations will realize that the law is the most just of all laws. At the end of the book, the Sibyl describes the establishment of the utopian state, a theocracy governed by no other than God himself. The *basilêion* becomes a metaphor for God's presence on earth. The earth will be transformed in light of classical and biblical utopias, such as the Isles of the Blessed or the Promised Land. With regard to the Sibyl, however, Utopia is not place at the end of the earth (Isles of the Blessed) nor at the centre (Zion) of the world. According to the Sibyl the entire earth will be filled with God's presence; the entire earth will be transformed into Utopia.

#### 11.4.1 Locating the author and the addresses of the Third Sibyl

The Diaspora is the primary geographical setting for the Sibyl and the compilers of the book. Both the authors and the Sibyl evade geographical localisation. Traditionally, the Sibyl was a travelling prophetess who was associated with more than one place. The Third Sibyl in particular is linked with Erythrae but it is never made clear whether this identification is the right one. The Sibyl is neither here nor there. Like the people of God she is said to derive from Babylonia from where she travelled the entire habitable world to prophesy on behalf of the Jewish God.

Neither Egypt nor Asia Minor can be fixed as the origin of the Third Sibylline Oracle. The seventh king of Egypt, which has been seen as a hallmark for relating the book to Alexandria, as he appears in the Third Sibyl, serves as a timeframe with no particular historical reference. He signifies a certain undisclosed period in the near future when God will put the horizontal course of history to an end and establish his everlasting dominion for all people. I do not see a reference to the socio-political status of the Egyptian Jews.

The Sibyl's origin in Asia Minor as proposed by Buitenwerf could not be verified. The association with Asia Minor is owed to the Sibyl's traditional association with the area rather than the author's own location. Most of the oracles concerning Asia Minor are either copies or imitations of pagan Sibyls native to the area.

The Sibyl cannot be fixed to a specific place and nor does she want to. The traditional image of the Sibyl as a wanderer needs to be appreciated in its own right. The compilers of the Third Book felt no need to tie the Sibyl to any specific location. For them it was of crucial importance to relate their universal message to a figure that was traditionally associated with such claims.

This makes it hard to locate the compilers of the Third Sibyl. Since the Third Sibyl was composed by more than one hand it is even more complicated to connect the book with a specific location. That the book was composed in the Diaspora is out of the question. The Diaspora is the predominant social space of the authors of the Third Sibylline Oracle.

There are several elements throughout the book that connect the Sibyl with texts that can be located more easily. The Sibyl owes a lot to Daniel, which was composed in Judea under the impression of the religious persecution through Antiochus IV. She also has a lot in common with texts such as Greek Sirach and Philo which stem from Alexandria. The Sibyl also shares a lot with the Greek Wisdom of Solomon, which is usually also believed to derive from Egyptian Judaism. It cannot be said with certainty that Wisdom stems from Egypt but it is generally assumed because the Jewish Diaspora in Egypt is known to have flourished in the Hellenistic era. Equally, an Egyptian origin cannot be claimed with certainty for the Third Sibyl.

What can be said with certainty, however, is that the Sibyl's similarities to other Jewish-Hellenistic texts are not incidental. We have observed that her Bible is the Septuagint in one form or another.<sup>327</sup> The Sibyl also draws freely from Hesiod and Homer which points to the education of the writers. Her indebtedness to sapiential literature anchors her in a time and place where Hellenistic Judaism thrived. Alexandria is indeed a likely place for this. However, thriving communities were also present in Asia Minor, such as Smyrna or Ephesus although scriptural evidence is lacking.

The Sibyl's horizontal line does not only cover history but also geography. The Sibyl's geographical horizon is based on biblical geography on the one hand and Graeco-Roman geography on the other. She knows of the classical division of the earth into three continents, is oriented on the east and is, to a certain extent, relying on the Table of Nations tradition.

The Sibyl's debt to the table of nations and classical geography is evident from her account of the Titanomachy and the tripartite division of the earth. The tripartite division of the earth among the three sons of Noah is a concept that remained popular way down into the Medieval. Greek geography differentiated between three continents Europe, Asia,

---

<sup>327</sup> The version that the Sibyl had is not necessarily the same as we now have.

Africa/Libya from the fifth century BCE onwards. The tripartite division among the sons of Noah was also based on those three continents.

Her east-west alignment is visible in her predictions against Rome which she refers to as coming from the western sea or as daughters of the west and in her prediction about a king from the east who is modelled in Isaiah's prophecies about Cyrus. On the ideological level, the authors defend their Judaism and their social space, i.e. the Jewish Diaspora, against the current rule, namely the Roman Empire.

Throughout her oracles, the Sibyl names many places and regions. Some of those can be related to the original pagan Sibyls while others are indebted to the table of nations. Josephus updated the Table of Nations in Gen 10 to the names current in his day, attributing the change of nomenclature to the Greeks. Whether or not Josephus was dependent on the Sibyl (or vice versa) cannot be said with certainty, however, they seem to arise from the same assumptions about the geography of the ancient world.

Whereas in the first half of the book the division of the world and the succession of empires are the Sibyl's focus, the Sibyl is less and less interested in the horizontal geographical outline of the world in the second half. Beginning in line 489 the focus shifts to the announcement of divine retribution for the idolaters and the manifestation of the divine dominion and is structured by four admonitions of the nations to convert to God. The demarcation of space is nullified in the end when all space is redefined as Utopia.

That the Sibyl addresses the Greeks is part of the Sibylline genre. Just like in Wisdom her real addressees are Diaspora Jews whom she is admonishing to walk in the ways of God in order to be a part of his utopian dominion. She pretends to be aimed at Gentiles to show that Hellenistic culture and Judaism are not necessarily contradictory with the underlying premise that the Jewish law is older and better than any other law because it is of divine origin. The Sibyl elevates the Jewish law above all other laws as the most just of all laws and also depicts it in terms of natural law. The law is the way of God that one is required to walk in; it facilitates the reciprocal vertical line.

#### **11.4.2 The image of the land**

The land in the Third Sibyl is nowhere identifiable: it is an abstract place. Its importance is historical, not eschatological. The kingdom of Solomon was the ideal kingdom of the past in which the law was observed. Because the people of God were led astray and did not heed the law they were forced to leave the land but most of all it meant the loss of the temple. The loss of the temple is a symbol for the retreat of God's presence and benevolence. In the future, the entire earth will be transformed into Utopia, there is no restriction to a particular place.

The land is altogether downplayed in the Third Sibyl. This results from the image of the Sibyl as a wanderer and the one hand and from the book's Diaspora setting on the other.

There is also no reference to the people of God being Israelites or Judeans. The people of God are the ones who received the law and they too can fall from grace with God should they fail to heed it. This leads to the conclusion that the Third Sibyl is aimed at Jews and reflects an inner-Jewish debate on who is righteous and who is not. The same debate can be observed in the Wisdom of Solomon where we also find an opposition between righteous and wicked but no reference at all to Israel, Judea or the people of Israel. In the end nationality becomes completely irrelevant, only those who turn to God and his law will live to see the utopian conditions. The Sibyl's Utopia surpasses all other utopias because it is not set in or limited to a specific location.

#### **11.4.3 The image of the law: the utopian constitution**

The role of the law has been discussed in light of biblical and classical utopias. Like Plato's Republic the law is a Utopia. Whereas Plato's Republic was one not to be realised, the law in the Sibyl, which is the will of God, is the ideal constitution so that it will be the law of the final utopian state. Plato's "Republic" or Cicero's "On the Laws" picture the ideal city state but the Sibyl outlines out the ideal theocracy. The law is *eutopia* rather than *outopia*.

#### **11.4.4 The origin and date of the Third Sibylline Oracle**

Dating the Third Sibyl is no less complicated than locating her. As we have it, the book is a collection. The earliest strata may stem from the Mithridatic Wars but they probably were not incorporated into the Third Sibyl until the conquest of Pompey in 63 BCE. In fact the book as we now have it must have originated between 63 BCE and 70 CE. This can be drawn from the image of the Rome that the Sibyl propagates. Furthermore, Rome is depicted as the last in a chain of empires prior to the manifestation of God's dominion on earth. There is only one passage in particular that presupposes the destruction of the temple so that the rest of the book was already present by 70 CE. In lines 328-329 the destruction of the temple is attributed to the Romans. However, it has been made clear that the passage is modelled on an oracle against Babylon in lines 303-313 and is probably a later addition.

#### **11.4.5 The images of space in the Third Sibylline Oracle**

The concept of "space" has helped to understand not only how God and his dominion are perceived but also how they relate to human dominion and to the people in general. Space in

the Third Sibyl is endowed with religious and political meaning. We have seen that humans are invited to enter a reciprocal relationship with God through the observation of the law and the recognition of his one and only place of worship, the temple. This relationship is not *per se* limited to the people of God but in theory is open to all who turn to him.

The analysis of spaces in the Sibyl has also shown that specific places like Jerusalem or Judea do not appear in the text. Furthermore, the temple can be described in terms of abstract space. The temple in the Third Sibyl is a symbol of God's sovereignty. The land and city have also turned into abstract space. There is no hope for the return of the people of God to Zion. Instead, the entire earth will be transformed into utopia. The description of this Utopia relies on biblical images of future Jerusalem as well as on classical utopias. In all of this, the Third Sibyl can be seen as an exponent of the Jewish-Hellenistic world in the Diaspora alongside the works of Philo, Josephus, Sirach, and Wisdom.

We have also learned that the Sibyl takes part in what in Graeco-Roman antiquity was generally known about the geography and the division of the world. Here, the Third Sibyl partakes in the shared knowledge of the ancient world. Through her knowledge of geographical space and its political distribution the Sibyl is able to pick up on the propagandistic claims of the Graeco-Roman overlords to turn them against them. Accordingly, the kingdom from the western sea will be thwarted by God who in turn sends a king from the east to avail his people. The human kings who seek world dominion are bound to fail in their attempt because only God is sovereign. Implicitly, God is sovereign throughout the book despite the claims of the hubristic human kings. Only in the end, however, he will manifest his dominion on earth and turn it into Utopia. Throughout the book God is the true controller of the world and everything that happens in it. Control and dominion of space are restricted to God. The analysis of space has helped to unveil how the divine dominion relates to human kingship. The Sibyls knowledge and theological convictions have transpired into Judaism and early Christianity. This study should provide helpful for all who wish to view the 'kingdom of God' in the New Testament in a new light. The uncontested dominion of God is the primary mechanism of control in the Third Sibylline Book.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations follow the SBL Handbook of Style. Additionally the following abbreviations are used.

Anth.Graec. Anthologia Graeca

ARGU Arbeiten zur Religion und Geschichte des Urchristentums

BDR Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch (Blass//Debrunner/Rehkopf)

BCH Bulletin de correspondance hellénique

CPJ Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum

EWNT Etymologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament

GLAJJ Greek and Latin authors on Jews and Judaism

IGR Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas Pertinentes

IJO Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis

JNG Jahrbuch für Numismatik

JSJSup Journal for the study of Judaism Supplements

MDAI(A) Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung

OALD Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary

OED Oxford English Dictionary

RIC Roman Imperial Coinage

RPC Roman provincial coinage

SEG Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources and text editions

#### Authors and works

##### Aeschylus

Smyth, Herbert Weir, trans. *Aeschylus*. Vol. 2. 3rd ed. LCL 145, 146. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971-1973.

##### Letter of Aristeas

Pelletier, André, ed. *Lettre d'Aristée a Philocrate*. SC 89. Paris: Cerf, 1962.

Shutt, R. J. H. "The Letter of Aristeas." Pages 7–34 in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*. Edited by Charlesworth. Vol. 2. 2 vols. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985.

##### Aristotle

Rackham, H., trans. *Aristotle. Politics*. Repr. LCL 264. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.

———, t trans. *Aristotle. The Athenian Constitution*. Repr. LCL 285. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961.

Schönberger, Otto, trans. *Aristoteles. Über Die Welt*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2009.

##### Aristophanes

Henderson, Jeffrey, trans. *Aristophanes: Clouds. Wasps. Peace*. LCL 488. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998.

— — —, trans. *Aristophanes: Frogs. Assemblywomen. Wealth*. LCL 180. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.

##### Artapanos

Holladay, Carl R. *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors: Historiensi*. Vol. 1. 4 vols. SBLTT 20. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1983.

##### Ascension of Moses

Brandenburger, Egon. *Himmelfahrt Moses*. Edited by Ulrich B. Müller and Albertus Frederik Johannes Klijn. JSRZ 5.2. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976.

##### Augustus

Caesar, Augustus. *Res gestae divi Augusti ex monumentis ancyrano et apolloniensi: in usum scholarum*. Edited by Theodor Mommsen. 2nd ed. Berlin: Weidmann, 1883. No pages. Online: [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL21372034M/Res\\_gestae\\_divi\\_Augusti](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL21372034M/Res_gestae_divi_Augusti).

##### Cassius Dio

Cary, E., trans. *Dio's Roman History in Nine Volumes*. 9 vols. Repr. LCL 32, 37, 53, 66, 82-83, 175-177. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960-1990.

##### Cicero

Rackham, R., trans. *Cicero: On the Nature of the Gods. Academics*. LCL 268. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933.

##### Clement of Alexandria

Clemens, Alexandrinus. *Les Stromates*. Edited by Alain Le Boulluec. 7 vols. SC 30, 38, 278, 279. Paris: Cerf, 1951-1981.

Stählin, Otto, ed. *Des Clemens von Alexandria Ausgewählte Schriften*. 5 vols. Reprint. Bibliothek der Kirchenväter. Nendeln: Klaus-Thomson, 1968.

Diodorus of Sicily

Oldfather, C.H. et al, trans. *Diodorus Siculus: Library of History*. 12 vols. LCL 279. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933-1967.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Cary, Ernest, trans. *Dionysius of Halicarnassus: Roman Antiquities*. 7 vols. LCL 347. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937-1950.

Euhemerus of Messene

Winiarczyk, Marek. *Euhemerus von Messene: Leben, Werk und Nachwirkung*. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 157. München: Saur, 2002.

Eusebius

Eusebius. *Eusebius Werke, Band 8: Die Praeparatio Evangelica*. Edited by K. Mras. Vol. 43.1. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954.

———. *Eusebius Werke, Band 8: Die Praeparatio Evangelica*. Edited by K. Mras. Vol. 43.2. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1956.

Hesiod

West, Martin L., trans. *Hesiod: Works and Days*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1978.

Homer

Merry, William Walter, and James Riddell, trans. *Homer's Odyssey. Edited with English notes, appendices*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886.

von der Mühl, Peter, trans. *Homeri Odyssea*. Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1962.

Murray, A.T., trans. *Homer: Iliad, Books 1-12*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. LCL 170. London: Heinemann, 1924.

———, trans. *Homer: Iliad, Books 13-24*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. LCL 171. London: Heinemann, 1925.

———, trans. *Homer: Odyssey, Books 1-12*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. LCL 104. London: Heinemann, 1919.

———, trans. *Homer: Odyssey, Books 13-24*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. LCL 105. London: Heinemann, 1919.

Lactantius

Monat, Pierre, trans. *Lactance: Institutions divines*. SC 204, 205, 326, 337, 377. Paris: Cerf, 1973-1992.

John Lydus

Wünsch, Richard, ed. *Ioannis Lydi Liber de Mensibus*. Repr. Teubner. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967.

Josephus

Mason, Steve, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Against Apion: translation and commentary*. Translated by John M. G. Barclay. Vol. 10. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

———, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Judean Antiquities Books 1-4: translation and commentary*. Translated by Louis H. Feldman. Vol. 3. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

———, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Judean Antiquities Books 5-7: translation and commentary*. Translated by Christopher Begg. Vol. 4. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

———, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Judean Antiquities Books 8 - 10: translation and commentary*. Translated by Christopher T. Begg. Vol. 5. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

———, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Judean War 2: translation and commentary*. Translated by Steve Mason. Vol. 1B. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

———, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Life of Josephus: translation and commentary*. Translated by Steve Mason. Vol. 9. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Thackeray, Henry St. J., Ralph Marcus, and Louis H. Feldman, trans. *Josephus: in 10 volumes*. 10 vols. Repr. LCL. London: Heinemann, 1993.

Jubilees

Berger, Klaus. *Das Buch der Jubiläen*. Edited by Werner Georg Kümmel, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk. JSRZ 2.3. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1981.

Charles, R. H. *The Book of Jubilees: Translation of Early Jewish and Palestinian Texts*. London: Black, 1902.

Justin Martyr



Munier, Charles, ed. *Saint Justin. Apologie Pour Les Chrétiens*. SC no. 507. Paris: Cerf, 2006.

#### Lactantius

Heck, Eberhard, trans. *Lactantius: Divinarum institutionum, Liber VII, Appendix, Indices*. Teubner. Monachii: Saur, 2011.

Monat, Pierre, trans. *Lactance: Institutions divines, 1-2*. SC 326, 337. Paris: Cerf, 1986-1987.

Perrin, Michel, trans. *Lactance: Épitomé des institutions divines*. SC 335. Paris: Cerf, 1987.

#### Lucian

Duff, James D., trans. *Lucian: The Civil War (Pharsalia)*. Repr. LCL 2020. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.

#### Oracle of the Potter

Koenen, Ludwig. "Die Apologie des Töpfers an König Amenophis oder das Töpferorakel." Pages 139–88 in *Apokalyptik und Ägypten: eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten*. Edited by Bernd U. Schipper and Andreas Blasius. OLA 107. Leuven: Peeters, 2002.

———. "Die Prophezeiungen des 'Töpfers'." *ZPE* 2 (January 1, 1968): 178–209.

#### Ovid

Miller, Frank Justus, trans. *Ovid. Metamorphoses*. 2 vols. LCL 42, 43. London: Heinemann, 1928.

#### Pausanias

Jones, William Henry S., trans. *Pausanias: Description of Greece, in 4 Volumes with a Companion Volume Containing Maps, Plans and Indices*. 4 vols. LCL 93, 188, 272, 297. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918-1935.

#### Philo of Alexandria

Colson, Francis H., trans. *Philo: In Ten Volumes (and Two Supplementary Volumes)*. 10 vols. Repr. LCL. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

#### Phlegon

Brodersen, Kai, ed. *Das Buch der Wunder: und Zeugnisse seiner Wirkungsgeschichte*. Texte zur Forschung 79. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002.

#### Plato

Shorey, Paul, trans. *Plato. The Republic*. 2 vols. Repr. LCL 237, 276. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.

#### Plutarch

Babbitt, F.C., trans. *Plutarch. Moralia, Volume V: Isis and Osiris. The E at Delphi. The Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse. The Obsolescence of Oracles*. Vol. 5. 16 vols. LCL 306. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936.

Perrin, Bernadotte, trans. *Plutarch. Lives, Volume VII: Demosthenes and Cicero. Alexander and Caesar*. Vol. 7. 11 vols. LCL 99. London: Heinemann, 1919.

Siebeking, Wilhelm, ed. *Plutarch. Pythici dialogi*. 2nd ed. Teubner. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1997.

#### Pliny the Elder

Rackham, H., trans. *Pliny the Elder. Natural History*. Vol. 1, 2, 9. 10 vols. Repr. LCL 330, 352, 418. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.

#### Polybius

Paton, W. R., trans. *Polybius: The Histories, Book 1-12*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Revised. LCL 128. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010.

#### Pseudo-Eupolemos

Holladay, Carl R. *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors: Historians*. Vol. 1. 4 vols. SBLTT 20. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1983.

#### Sibylline Oracles

Alexandre, Charles. *Excursus ad Sibyllina: seu, De sibyllis, earumque vel tanquam earum carminibus profanis, judaicis, christianisve, dissertationes VII, insertis graece et latine, commentarioque auctis sibyllinarum*

- gentilium fragmentis quæ supersunt. Paris: Firmin Didot fratres, 1856. Online: [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23298775M/Excursus\\_ad\\_Sibyllina](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23298775M/Excursus_ad_Sibyllina).
- Geffcken, Johannes. *Die Oracula Sibyllina*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902a. Online: <http://archive.org/details/dieoraculasibyl02geffgoog>.
- Kurfeß, Alfons. *Sibyllinische Weissagungen: Urtext und Übersetzung*. Tusculum 170. München: Heimeran, 1951.
- Merkel, Helmut. "Sibyllinen." Pages 1041–1139 in *Apokalypsen*. Edited by Werner Georg Kümmel, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk. JSRZ 5. Gütersloh: Mohn, 2003.
- Rzach, Alois. *Chresmoi sibylliakoi*. Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1891. Online: [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23286403M/Chresmoi\\_sibylliakoi](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23286403M/Chresmoi_sibylliakoi).

Sir Thomas Moore

- Moore, Sir Thomas. *Utopia: Latin Text and an English Translation*. Edited by George M. Logan, Robert Martin Adams, and Clarence H. Miller. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Stobaeus

- Wachsmuth, Kurt, and Otto Hense, eds. *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologium*. 5 vols. Berlin: Weidman, 1884-1923. Online: <http://archive.org/details/joannisstobaecian04stovuoft>.

Strabo

- Jones, Horace L., trans. *The geography of Strabo: in eight volumes*. 8 vols. Repr. LCL. London: Heinemann, 1967.

Sueton

- Rolfe, J. C., trans. *Suetonius. Lives of the Caesars*. 2 vols. 4th ed. LCL 31, 38. London: Heinemann, 1928.

Tacitus

- Moore, Clifford Herschel, trans. *Tacitus: The Histories, Books IV - V. The Annals, Books I - III: In Five Volumes*. 7th ed. LCL 249. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

- Becker, Jürgen. "Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen." Pages 15–163 in *Apokalypsen*. Edited by Werner Georg Kümmel, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk. JSRZ 3. Gütersloh: Mohn, 2001.
- Charlesworth, James H. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983.

Tibullus

- Goold, G.P., ed. *Catullus. Tibullus. Pervigilium Veneris*. Translated by J.P. Postgate, J.W. Mackail, and F.W. Cornish. Revised. LCL 6. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913.

Thucydides

- Smith, C.F., trans. *Thucydides*. 4 vols. 2nd ed. LCL 108-110, 169. London: Heinemann, 1928-1935.

Virgil

- Fairclough, Henry Rushton, trans. *Virgil*. 2 vols. Revised. LCL 63-64. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

## Bibles

- Aland, Kurt, and Eberhard Nestle, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 27th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
- Elliger, Karl, ed. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. 4. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990.
- Rahlfs, Alfred, and Robert Hahnhart, eds. *Septuaginta: id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*. Editio altera. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.

## Collections of texts

### Papyri

- Cowley, A. E. (Arthur Ernest). *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.  
Online: <http://archive.org/details/aramaicpapyrioff00ahikuoft>.
- Crönert, Wilhlem. "Oraculorum Sibyllinorum Fragmentum Osloense." *Symbolae Osloenses* 6 (1928): 57–58.
- Gronewald, Michael. "Sibyllinische Orakel." Edited by C. Armoni and J. Lundon. *Kölner Papyri (Papyrologica Coloniensis)* 12 (2010): 1-17.
- Preisendanz, Karl, ed. *Papyri Graecae Magicae: die griechischen Zauberpapyri*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Leipzig: Teubner, 1973.
- Tcherikover, V., and A. Fuks, eds. *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*. 3 vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957-1964.

### Coinage

- Burnett, Andrew, Michel Amandry, Pere P. Ripollès Alegre, and Marguerite Spoerri Butcher, eds. *Roman Provincial Coinage*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. London: British Museum Press, 1999.
- Mattingly, Harold, and Edward Allen Sydenham, eds. *The Roman Imperial Coinage*. 10 vols. London: Spink, 1923.

### Pseudepigrapha and other Jewish texts

- Charlesworth, James H. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983.
- . *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985.
- Kümmel, Werner Georg, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk, eds. *Apokalypsen*. JSHRZ 5. Gütersloh: Mohn, 2003.
- Walter, Nikolaus. *Fragmente jüdisch-hellenistischer Historiker: Historische und legendarische Erzählungen*. Edited by Werner Georg Kümmel, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk. JSHRZ 1.2. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976.
- Stern, Menahem, ed. *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism: Edited with Introductions, Translations, and Commentary*. 3 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974.

### Various Greek texts

- Diehl, Ernst. *Anthologia lyrica Graeca*. 2 vols. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1925.
- Diels, Hermann. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker griechisch und deutsch*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1903. No pages.  
Online: [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6947148M/Die\\_Fragmente\\_der\\_Vorsokratiker](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6947148M/Die_Fragmente_der_Vorsokratiker).
- Jacoby, Felix, ed. *Fragmente Der Griechischen Historiker*. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1953-1999.
- Majercik, Ruth D. *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Studies in Greek and Roman religion 5. Leiden: Brill, 1989.
- Thesleff, Holger. *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period*. Abo: Abo Akademi, 1965.
- Worthington, Ian. *Brill's New Jacoby*. Leiden: Brill, 2007. No pages. Cited 27 August 2013. Online: <http://www.brillonline.com>.

### Inscriptions

- Kirchhoff, A., ed. *Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1873-. No pages. Online: <http://www.degruyter.com/view/serial/16779>.
- Lafaye, G., ed. *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanam pertinentes: auctoritate et impensis Acad. inscriptionum et litterarum humaniorum collectae et ed. Repr.* Chicago: Ares Publisher Inc., 1964.
- Noy, David, and Walter Ameling, eds. *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*. 3 vols. Texts and studies in ancient Judaism. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.

### Dead Sea Scrolls

- Tov, Emanuel, ed. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. 40 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955-2009.
- Ulrich, Eugene Charles, ed. *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: transcriptions and textual variants*. VTSup 134. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

### Various texts

- Kaiser, Otto, ed. *Texte Aus Der Umwelt Des Alten Testaments Gesamteition Auf CD-ROM*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005. Print ed.: Kaiser, Otto, ed. *Texte Aus Der Umwelt Des Alten Testaments*. 7 vols. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2004.
- Loretz, O., J. Sanmartín, and M. Dietrich, eds. *Die Keilalphabetischen Texte Aus Ugarit*. 2nd ed. AOAT 24/1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976.

## Dictionaries and Lexica

### Greek dictionaries

- Balz, Horst. *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (EWNT)*. 3 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992.
- Botterwerk, Johannes, ed. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament (ThWAT)*. Vol. 3. 10 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey William. *Theological dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. TDNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Danker, Frederick W., and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature: based on Walter Bauer's Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments ...* 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Friedrich, Gerhard, Oskar Rühle, and Gerhard Kittel. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (TWNT)*. 10 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1979.
- Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, eds. *A Greek-English lexicon: with a supplement 1968*. 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. Online: <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/lsg/>.
- Louw, Johannes P., and E.A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains (L&N)*. 2nd ed. New York: United Bible Society, 1989.
- Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint*. Louvain: Peeters, 2009.
- Panayiotou, G. "Addenda to the LSJ Greek-English Lexicon: lexicographical notes on the vocabulary of the Oracula Sibyllina." *Hellenica* 38, no. 1 (1987): 48-66.

### Hebrew dictionaries

- Brown, Francis, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic; coded with the numbering system from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. 13 (repr. 1906) ed. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010.
- Köhler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner, eds. *Hebräisches Und Aramäisches Lexikon Zum Alten Testament*. 2 vols. 3rd ed. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

### Grammars

- Blass, Friedrich, Friedrich Rehkopf, and Albert Debrunner. *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*. 18th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2001.
- Kühner, Raphael, Bernhard Gerth, and Friedrich Blass. *Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache: Satzlehre*. Vol. 2.1. 3rd ed. Hannover: Hahn, 1992.

### Concordances

- Denis, Albert-Marie. *Concordance grèque des pseudépigraphes d'Ancien Testament: concordance, corpus des textes, indices*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1987.
- Hatch, Edwin, and Henry A. Redpath. *A concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek versions of the Old Testament: including the apocryphal books*. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1900.

## Secondary Sources

- Atkinson, Kenneth. *I cried to the Lord: a study of the Psalms of Solomon's historical background and social setting*. JSJSup 84. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Aune, David E. *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983.
- . *Revelation 6-16*. WBC 2/3. Nashville: Word Books, 1998.
- . *Revelation 17-22*. WBC 3/3. Nashville: Word Books, 1998a.

- Bail, Ulrike. "Die verzogene Sehnsucht hinkt an ihren Ort": literarische Überlebensstrategien nach der Zerstörung Jerusalems im Alten Testament. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2004. Online: [http://www.ulrike-bail.de/gt\\_05424\\_z\\_bail.pdf](http://www.ulrike-bail.de/gt_05424_z_bail.pdf).
- Baltzer, Klaus. *Deutero-Isaiah: a commentary on Isaiah 40-55*. Edited by Peter Machinist. Translated by Magaret Kohl. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
- Barceló, Pedro. *Basileia, Monarchia, Tyrannis*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993.
- Barclay, John M. G. *Flavius Josephus: Against Apion: Translation and Commentary*. Edited by Steve Mason. Vol. 10. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- . *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.
- Barrett, C.K. *The Acts of the Apostles*. ICC 2/2. London: T & T Clark, 1994.
- Bartlett, J.R. *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Josephus, Aristaeus, The Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus*. Cambridge commentaries on writings of the Jewish and Christian world 200 BC to AD 200. Cambridge: CUP Archive, 1984.
- Barton, John. *Oracles of God: perceptions of ancient prophecy in Israel after the Exile*. Oxford: University Press, 1986.
- Bauckham, Richard. *The climax of prophecy: studies on the Book of Revelation*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993.
- Beavis, Mary Ann. *Jesus & utopia: looking for the kingdom of God in the Roman world*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.
- Ben Zvi, Ehud, ed. *Utopia and dystopia in prophetic literature*. Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 92. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006.
- Berger, Klaus, Werner Georg Kümmel, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk. *Das Buch der Jubiläen*. JSHRZ 2.3. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1981.
- Berges, Ulrich. *Jesaja 40-48*. HThKAT 37. Freiburg: Herder, 2008.
- Berquist, Jon L. "Critical Spaciality and the Construction of the Ancient World." Pages 14-29 in *"Imagining" biblical worlds: studies in spatial, social and historical constructs in honor of James W. Flanagan*. Edited by David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt. JSOTSup 359. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- Berquist, Jon L., and Claudia V. Camp. *Constructions of space II: the Biblical city and other imagined spaces*. OTS 490. New York: T & T Clark, 2008.
- Beuken, Willem A. M. *Jesaja 1-12*. HThKAT 34. Freiburg: Herder, 2003.
- . *Jesaja 13-27*. HThKAT 35. Freiburg: Herder, 2007.
- Bichler, Reinhold. "Herodots Historien unter dem Aspekt der Raumerfassung." Pages 67-80 in *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike*. Edited by Michael Rathmann. Mainz: Zabern, 2007.
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Isaiah 1-39: a new translation with introduction & commentary*. AB Series 19. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
- Blischke, Mareike Verena. *Die Eschatologie in der Sapientia Salomonis*. Vol. 26. FAT II. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
- Bloch, René S. *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum: Der Judenexkurs des Tacitus im Rahmen der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002.
- . "Orpheus als Lehrer des Musaios, Moses als Lehrer des Orpheus." Pages 65-82 in *Antike Mythen. Medien, Transformationen und Konstruktionen*. Edited by Ueli Dill and Christiane Walde. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.
- Bolz, Norbert. *Spiegel und Gleichnis: Festschrift für Jacob Taubes*. Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 1983.
- Borgen, Peder. *Philo of Alexandria: an Exegete for his Time*. NovTSup 86. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- . *Philo, John and Paul: new perspectives on Judaism and early Christianity*. BJS 131. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1987.
- Brandenburger, Egon, Ulrich B. Müller, and Albertus Frederik Johannes Klijn, eds. *Himmelfahrt Moses*. JSHRZ 5.2. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1976.
- Breytenbach, Cilliers. "Probable Reasons for Paul's Unfruitful Missionary Attempts in Asia Minor (a Note on Acts 16:6-7)." *Die Apostelgeschichte und die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung: Festschrift für Eckhard Plümacher zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by Cilliers Breytenbach and Jens Schröter. AJEC 57. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- Buitenwerf, Rieuwerd. *Book III of the Sibylline oracles and its Social Setting*. SVTP 17. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
- Buresch, Karl. "Die sibyllinische Quellgrotte in Erythrae." *MDAI(A)* 27 (1892): 16-157.
- Camp, Claudia V. "Introduction." Pages 1-17 in *Constructions of space II: the Biblical city and other imagined spaces*. Edited by Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp. Library of the Hebrew Bible/OTS 490. New York: T & T Clark, 2008.

- . "Storied Space, or, Ben Sira 'tells' a Temple." Pages 64-80 in *"Imagining" biblical worlds: studies in spatial, social and historical constructs in honor of James W. Flanagan*. Edited by David M. Gunn and Paula M. McNutt. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- Clauss, Manfred. Kaiser und Gott: Herrscherkult im römischen Reich. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1999.
- Camponovo, Odo. Königtum, Königsherrschaft und Reich Gottes in den frühjüdischen Schriften. OBO 58. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 1984.
- Chester, Andrew. "The Sibyl and the Temple." Pages 37-69 in *Templum amicitiae: essays on the second temple presented to Ernst Bammel*. Edited by William Horbury. JSNTSup 48. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991.
- Clauss, Manfred. Kaiser und Gott: Herrscherkult im römischen Reich. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1999.
- Collins, John J. Between Athens and Jerusalem Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- . Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- . Daniel: with an introduction to apocalyptic literature. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984b.
- . "Models of Utopia in Biblical Tradition." Pages 51-67 in *"A wise and discerning mind": essays in honor of Burke O. Long*. Edited by Burke O. Long, Saul M. Olyan, and Robert C. Culley. BJS 325. Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000a.
- . "Review of Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting, with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary." *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 14, no. 3 (May 1, 2005): 243.
- . "Review of valentin Nikiprowetzky, La troisième Sibylle." *JBL* 91, no. 2 (June 1, 1972): 278-280.
- . Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism. JSJSup 54. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- . "Sibylline Oracles." Pages 357-382 in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period. Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*. Edited by Michael E. Stone. CRINT 2. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984a.
- . The apocalyptic imagination: an introduction to Jewish apocalyptic literature. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- . "The Development of the Sibylline Tradition." Pages 421-459 in *Religion (Hellenistisches Judentum in römischer Zeit, ausgenommen Philon und Josephus)*. Edited by Wolfgang Haase. ANRW 2.20.1. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987.
- . "The Jewish Transformation of Sibylline Oracles." Pages 181-197 in *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*. Edited by John J. Collins. JSJSup 54. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- . "The Sibyl and the Potter: Political Propaganda in Ptolemaic Egypt." Pages 57-69 in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World*. Edited by Lukas Bormann, Kelly Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger. Vol. 47. NovTSup. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- . "The Sibylline Oracles." Pages 317-472 in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Edited by J.H. Charlesworth. Vol. 1. 2 vols. London: darton, Longman & Todd, 1984.
- . The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism. SBLDS 13. Missoula: SBL, 1974.
- . "The Third Sibyl revisited." Pages 2-19 in *Things revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone*. Edited by Ester G. Chazon. JSJSup 89. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- . "The Third Sibyl revisited." Pages 82-98 in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*. Edited by John J. Collins. JSJSup 100. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Dennerlein, Katrin. *Narratologie des Raumes*. Narratologia 22. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009.
- Dschulnigg, Peter. *Das Markusevangelium*. 27th ed. THKNT 2. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The Christ and the spirit: collected essays: Pneumatology*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998.
- Eckey, Wilfried. *Die Apostelgeschichte: der Weg des Evangeliums von Jerusalem nach Rom*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000.
- . *Die Apostelgeschichte: der Weg des Evangeliums von Jerusalem nach Rom*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000.
- Eddy, S.K. The King is Dead: Studies in Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334-31 B. C. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.
- Ego, Beate, ed. Gemeinde ohne Tempel: zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum. WUNT 118. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999.
- Engel, Helmut. *Das Buch der Weisheit*. Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar / Altes Testament 16. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1998.
- Engelmann, Hartmut, and Reinhold Merkelbach, eds. *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai: Teil II (Nr. 201-536)*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien. Bonn: Habelt, 1973.
- Eshel, Hanan. "The Kittim in the War Scroll and in the Pesharim." Pages 29-44 in *Historical perspectives from the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Edited by Daniel R. Schwartz, Avital Pinnick, and David Goodblatt. STDJ 37. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

- Forbiger, Albert. *Handbuch der Alten Geographie*. Vol. 3. 3 vols. Leipzig: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1966.
- Foucault, Michel. *Die Heterotopien*. Translated by Michael Bischoff. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005.
- . *Aesthetics, method, and epistemology*. Edited by James D. Faubion. 2 vols. Essential works of Foucault. London: Penguin Books, 2000.
- . "Of Other Spaces." Translated by Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (April 1, 1986): 22-27.
- . "Other Spaces: the Principles of Heterotopia." *Lotus* 48/49 (1984): 9-17.
- Franxman, Thomas W. *Genesis and the "Jewish Antiquities" of Flavius Josephus*. BibOr 35. Rome: Biblical Institute Press Rome, 1979.
- Fuchs, Harald. *Der geistige Widerstand gegen Rom in der antiken Welt*. 2nd ed. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1964.
- Gatz, Bodo. *Weltalter, goldene Zeit und sinnverwandte Vorstellungen*. Spudasmata 16. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967.
- Gauger, Jörg-Dieter. "Orakel und Brief." Pages 51-67 in *Rom und der griechische Osten, FS für Hatto H. Schmidt zum 65. Geburtstag*. Edited by Charlotte Schubert and Kai Brodersen. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995.
- . *Sibyllinische Weissagungen: griechisch-deutsch*. Tusculum 171. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998.
- Geffcken, Johannes. *Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula sibyllina*. Vol. 1. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 23. Leipzig: Teubner, 1902a. Online: [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6943785M/Komposition\\_und\\_Entstehungszeit\\_der\\_Oracula\\_sibyllina](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6943785M/Komposition_und_Entstehungszeit_der_Oracula_sibyllina).
- Geiger, Michaela. *Gottesräume: die literarische und theologische Konzeption von Raum im Deuteronomium*. BWANT 183. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2010.
- George, Mark K. *Israel's tabernacle as social space*. SBLAIL 2. Atlanta: SBL, 2009.
- Gerber, Christine. *Ein Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus: Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift "Contra Apionem"*. AGJU 40. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Gesche, Helga. "Kaiser Gordian mit dem Pfeil in Edessa." *JNG* 19 (1969): 47-77.
- Geus, Klaus. "Utopie und Geographie: Zum Weltbild der Griechen in frühhellenistischer Zeit." *Orbis Terrarum* 6 (2000): 55-90.
- Gill, David William J., and Conrad Gempf, eds. *The Book of Acts in its first century setting: The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman setting*. Vol. 2. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Goodman, Martin, ed. *Jews in a Graeco-Roman world*. Oxford: University Press, 1998.
- . *Judaism in the Roman world: collected essays*. AJEC 66. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- Gronewald, Michael. "Sibyllinische Orakel." Edited by C. Armoni and J. Lundon. *Kölner Papyri (Papyrologica Coloniensis)* 12 (2010): 1-17.
- Gruen, Erich S. *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- . *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*. Hellenistic Culture and Society 30. Berkley: University of California Press, 1998a.
- . "Jews, Greeks, and Romans in the Third Sibylline Oracle." Pages 15-36 in *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*. Edited by Martin Goodman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998b.
- . "Rome and Rhodes in the Second Century B. C.: A Historiographical Inquiry." *The Classical Quarterly* 25, no. 1. New Series (May 1975): 58-81.
- . *The Hellenistic world and the coming of Rome*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Gunn, David M., and Paula M. McNutt, eds. "Imagining" biblical worlds: studies in spatial, social and historical constructs in honor of James W. Flanagan. JSOTSup 359. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.
- Hagedorn, Anselm. "'Über jedes Land der Sünder kommt einst ein Sausen' Überlegungen zu einigen Fremdvölkerworten der Sibyllinen." Pages 73-98 in *Orakel und Gebete: interdisziplinäre Studien zur Sprache der Religion in Ägypten, Vorderasien und Griechenland in hellenistischer Zeit*. Edited by Johannes F. Diehl and Markus Witte. Vol. 38. FAT II. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.
- Hahn, Ferdinand, and Hans Klein. *Die frühchristliche Prophetie: ihre Voraussetzungen, ihre Anfänge und ihre Entwicklung bis zum Montanismus; eine Einführung*. Biblisch-Theologische Studien 116. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2011.
- Hengel, Martin. *Judentum und Hellenismus. Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jh. v. Chr.* 2nd ed. WUNT 10. Tübingen: Mohr, 1973.
- Hengel, Martin, and Anna Maria Schwemer, eds. *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult: im Judentum, Urchristentum und in der hellenistischen Welt*. WUNT 55. Tübingen: Mohr, 1991.
- Hillers, Delbert R. *Treaty-curses and the Old Testament prophets*. 16. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964.
- Hoffmann, Heinrich. *Das Gesetz in der frühjüdischen Apokalyptik*. SUNT 23. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999. Online: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn/resolver.pl?urn=urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00040438-3>.
- Hofmann, Norbert Johannes. *Die Assumptio Mosis: Studien zur Rezeption massgültiger Überlieferung*. JSJSup 67. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Holladay, Carl R. *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish authors: Historiens*. Vol. 1. 4 vols. SBLTT 20. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1983.

- Holtz, Gudrun. *Damit Gott sei alles in allem: Studien zum paulinischen und frühjüdischen Universalismus*. BZNW 149. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007.
- Horn, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Das Angeld des Geistes: Studien zur paulinischen Pneumatologie*. FRLANT 154. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1992.
- van der Horst, Pieter Willem. "Jewish Self-Definition by Way of Contrast in Oracula Sibyllina III 218-247." Pages 147-166 in *Aspects of Religious Contact and Conflict in the Ancient World*. Edited by Pieter Willem van der Horst. Utrechtse theologische reeks 31. Utrecht: Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid Universiteit Utrecht, 1995.
- . *The sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides: with introduction and commentary*. SVTP 4. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
- Irsigler, Hubert. *Zefanja*. HThKAT 51. Freiburg: Herder, 2002.
- Janowski, Bernd. "Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen." Pages 148-213 in *Gottes Gegenwart in Israel: Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments*. Edited by Bernd Janowski. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1993.
- . "Vom natürlichen zum symbolischen Raum: Aspekte der Raumwahrnehmung im Alten Testament." Pages 51-64 in *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike*. Edited by Michael Rathmann. Mainz: Zabern, 2007.
- Jooß, Elisabeth. *Raum: Eine Theologische Interpretation*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005.
- Keel, Othmar, and Silvia Schroer. *Schöpfung: biblische Theologien im Kontext altorientalischer Religionen*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002.
- Kippenberg, H.G. "'Dann wird der Orient herrschen und der Okzident dienen.' Zur Begründung eines gesamt Vorderasiatischen Standpunktes im Kampf gegen Rom." Pages 40-48 in *Spiegel und Gleichnis: Festschrift für Jacob Taubes*. Edited by N.W. Bolz/W. Hübener. Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 1983.
- Koch, Klaus. *Europa, Rom und der Kaiser vor dem Hintergrund von zwei Jahrtausenden Rezeption des Buches Daniel*. Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften: Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim-Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften e.V., Hamburg 15.1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997.
- Köckert, Matthias. "Wandlungen Gottes im antiken Israel." *BthZ* 22 (2005): 3-36.
- Kocsis, E. "Ost-West Gegensatz in den jüdischen Sibyllinen." *Novum Testamentum* 5, no. 2/3 (July 1, 1962): 105-110.
- Koenen, Ludwig. "Die Apologie des Töpfers an König Amenophis oder das Töpferorakel." Pages 139-188 in *Apokalyptik und Ägypten: eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten*. Edited by Bernd U. Schipper and Andreas Blasius. OLA 107. Leuven: Peeters, 2002.
- . "Die Prophezeiungen des 'Töpfers'." *ZPE* 2 (January 1, 1968): 178-209.
- Kolb, Anne. "Raumwahrnehmung und Raumerschließung durch römische Straßen." Pages 169-180 in *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike*. Edited by Michael Rathmann. Zabern: Mainz, 2007.
- Konkel, Michael. "Die Zweite Tempelvision Des Propheten Ezechiel." Pages 154-79 in *Gottesstadt Und Gottesgarten. Zu Geschichte Und Theologie Des Jerusalemer Tempels*. Edited by Othmar Keel. QD 191. Freiburg: Herder, 2002.
- Konradt, Matthias. *Israel, Kirche und die Völker im Matthäusevangelium*. WUNT 215. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.
- Kratz, R.G. "Das Sch<sup>e</sup>ma' des Psalters. Die Botschaft vom Reich Gottes nach Psalm 145." Pages 623-38 in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag*. Edited by Markus Witte. Vol. 2. 2 vols. BZAW 345. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004.
- . "The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings." Pages 435-79 in . Edited by A.S. van der Woude. BETHL 106. Leuven, 1993.
- . *Translatio imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld*. WMANT 63. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991.
- Kümmel, Werner Georg, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk. *Apokalypsen*. JSHRZ 5. Gütersloh: Mohn, 2003.
- Kümmerling, Franziska. *Raum: ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*. Edited by Stephan Günzel. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2010.
- Lefèbvre, Henri. *The production of space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991.
- Lied, Liv Ingeborg. *The other lands of Israel: imaginations of the land in 2 Baruch*. JSJSup 129. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Lieu, Judith. *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Lightfoot, Jane L. *The Sibylline oracles: with introduction, translation, and commentary on the first and second books*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Löw, Martina. *Raumsoziologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001.



- Magie, D. *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ*. Vol. 1-2. Princeton: Ayer, 1950.
- Maher, Michael, ed. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*. The Aramaic Bible 1B. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992.
- Maier, Christl. *Daughter Zion, mother Zion: gender, space, and the sacred in ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
- Maier, Johann. "Das Gesetz zwischen Qumran und Septuaginta." Pages 155-165 in *Im Brennpunkt: die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel*. Edited by Heinz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Offerhaus. Vol. 1. 2 vols. BWANT 153. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001.
- Martens, John W. *One God, one law: Philo of Alexandria on the Mosaic and Greco-Roman law*. Studies in Philo of Alexandria and Mediterranean antiquity 2. Boston, Mass.: Brill Academic, 2003.
- McGing, B. C. *The foreign policy of Mithridates VI Eupator, King of Pontus*. Leiden: Brill, 1986.
- Meeks, Wayne A. *The prophet-king: Moses traditions and the Johannine christology*. NovTSup 14. Leiden: Brill, 1967.
- Mendels, D. "The Five Empires: A Note on a Propagandistic Topos." *The American Journal of Philology* 102, no. 3 (October 1, 1981): 330-337.
- Merkel, Helmut. "Die Gottesherrschaft in der Verkündigung Jesu." Pages 119-161 in *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult: im Judentum, Urchristentum und in der hellenistischen Welt*. Edited by Anna Maria Schwemer and Martin Hengel. WUNT 55. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991.
- . "Sibyllinen." Pages 1041-1139 in *Apokalypsen*. Edited by Werner Georg Kümmel, Anna Maria Schwemer, and Otto Merk. JSHRZ 5. Gütersloh: Mohn, 2003.
- Merkelbach, Reinhold. *Mithras*. Königstein: Hain, 1984.
- Merkelbach, Reinhold, and Josef Stauber, eds. "Die Quellgrotte der Sibylle zu Erythrai." Pages 380-382 in *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten: Die Westküste Kleinasiens von Knidos bis Ilion*. Vol. 1. 6 vols. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1998.
- Merklein, Helmut. *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft: eine Skizze*. 3rd ed. SBS 111. Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989.
- Merry, William Walter, and James Riddell. *Homer's Odyssey. Edited with English notes, appendices*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886.
- Millar, Fergus. "Review of Valentin Nikiprowetzky, *La troisième Sibylle*." *JTS* 23, no. 1 (1972): 223-224.
- Mitchell, Stephen. *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor: The Celts and the Impact of Roman Rule*. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Oxford: University Press, 1993.
- . "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews and Christians." Pages 81-148 in *Pagan monotheism in late antiquity*. Edited by P. N. Athanasiadē and M. Frede. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.
- . "Further thoughts on the cult of Theos Hypsistos." Pages 167-208 in *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*. Edited by Stephen Mitchell and Peter Van Nuffelen. Cambridge: University Press, 2010.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo. *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization*. Cambridge: University Press, 1975.
- . *Ausgewählte Schriften zur Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung*. Edited by Glenn W. Most. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998.
- . "From the Pagan to the Christian Sibyl: Prophecy as History of Religion." *The Uses of Greek and Latin: Historical Essays*. Edited by A. C. Dionisotti, Anthony Grafton, and Jill Kraye. London: Warburg Institute, 1988.
- . "From the Pagan to the Christian Sibyl: Prophecy as History of Religion." Pages 725-44 in *Nono Contributo Alla Storia Degli Studi Classici e Del Mondo Antico*. Vol. 9. Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1992.
- Müller, Klaus W. "König und Vater: Streiflichter zur metaphorischen Rede über Gott in der Umwelt des Neuen Testaments." Pages 21-44 in *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult: im Judentum, Urchristentum und in der hellenistischen Welt*. Edited by Anna Maria Schwemer and Martin Hengel. WUNT 55. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991.
- Neusner, Jacob. "Qumran and Jerusalem: Two Jewish Roads to Utopia." *JBR* 27, no. 4 (1959): 284-90.
- . *The Rabbinic Utopia*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2007.
- Nicolet, Claude. *Space, geography, and politics in the early Roman empire*. Jerome lectures 19. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- Niehr, Herbert. *Der höchste Gott*. BZAW 190. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990.
- Nikiprowetzky, Valentin. *La troisième Sybille*. Études juives 9. Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1970.
- Nissinen, Martti. *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective*. Translated by Kirsi Stjerna. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.
- Parke, Herbert William. *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity*. Edited by Brian C. MacGing. London: Routledge, 1988.

- Pfeiffer, Henrik. *Das Heiligtum von Bethel im Spiegel des Hoseabuches*. FRLANT 183. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999.
- Phlegon. *Das Buch der Wunder: und Zeugnisse seiner Wirkungsgeschichte*. Edited by Kai Brodersen. Texte zur Forschung 79. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002.
- Pohlenz, Max. *Die Stoa: Geschichte Einer Geistigen Bewegung*. 7th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992.
- Price, S. R. F. *Rituals and power: the Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor*. Cambridge: University Press, 1985.
- Ramsey, John T., and A. Lewis Licht. *The comet of 44 B.C. and Caesar's funeral games*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.
- Rathmann, Michael. "Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume im Hellenismus am Beispiel Asiens." Pages 81-102 in *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike*. Edited by Michael Rathmann. Mainz, 2007.
- Rathmann, Michael, ed. *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike*. Mainz: Zabern, 2007.
- Rau, Eckhard. *Jesus - Freund von Zöllnern und Sündern: eine methodenkritische Untersuchung*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000.
- Redpath, Henry A. "The Geography of the Septuagint." *AJT* 7, no. 2 (April 1, 1903): 289-307.
- Reinach, Salomon. "Deux inscriptions de l'Asie-Mineure." *REG* 4 (1891): 268-286.
- Riedweg, Christoph. *Jüdisch-hellenistische Imitation eines orphischen Hieros Logos*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1993.
- Rzach, Alois. *Chresmoi sibylliakoi*. Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1891. Online: [http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23286403M/Chresmoi\\_sibylliakoi](http://openlibrary.org/books/OL23286403M/Chresmoi_sibylliakoi).
- Sanford, Eva Matthews. "Roman Avarice in Asia." *JNES* 9, no. 1 (January 1, 1950): 28-36.
- Schäfer, Peter. *Studien Zur Geschichte Und Theologie Des Rabbinischen Judentums*. AGJU 15. Leiden: Brill, 1978.
- Schipper, Bernd U., and Andreas Blasius, eds. *Apokalyptik und Ägypten: eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten*. OLA 107. Leuven: Peeters, 2002.
- Schmidt, Ludwig. *Studien Zur Priesterschrift*. BZAW 214. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993.
- Schüpphaus, Joachim. *Die Psalmen Salomos: ein Zeugnis jerusalemener Theologie und Frömmigkeit in der Mitte des vorchristlichen Jahrhunderts*. ALGHJ 7. Leiden: Brill, 1977.
- Schürer, Emil. *Das Judentum in der Zerstreuung und die jüdische Literatur*. 4th ed. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1909.
- . *The history of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)*. Edited by Géza Vermès. Revised. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986.
- . *The history of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)*. Edited by Géza Vermès, Martin Goodman, and Fergus Millar. 3 vols. Revised. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, n.d.
- Schweitzer, Steven James. "Utopia and Utopian Literary Theory: Some Preliminary Observations." Pages 13-26 in *Utopia and dystopia in prophetic literature*. Edited by Ehud Ben Zvi. Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 92. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006.
- Scott, James M. *Geography in early Judaism and Christianity: the Book of Jubilees*. Reprint. SNTSMS 113. Cambridge: University Press, 2003.
- . "Luke's geographical horizon." Pages 483-544 in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting: Graeco-Roman Setting*. Edited by David William J. Gill and Conrad Gempf. Vol. 2. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- . *Paul and the nations: the Old Testament and Jewish background of Paul's mission to the nations with special reference to the destination of Galatians*. WUNT 84. Tübingen: Mohr, 1995.
- Skehan, Patrick W., and Alexander A. Di Lella. *The wisdom of Ben Sira: a new translation with notes*. ACB 39. New York: Doubleday, 1987.
- Soja, Edward W. *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996.
- Stemberger, Günter. "Review of Bernd Wander, Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten. Studien zum heidnischen Umfeld von Diasporasynagogen." *JBAC* 42 (1999): 184-188.
- Stewart, Eric C. *Gathered around Jesus: an alternative spatial practice in the gospel of Mark*. Matrix : the Bible in Mediterranean context 6. Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, 2009.
- Swain, Joseph Ward. "The Theory of the Four Monarchies Opposition History under the Roman Empire." *Classical Philology* 35, no. 1 (January 1, 1940): 1-21.
- Theobald, Michael. *Das Evangelium nach Johannes: Kapitel 1-12*. Regensburger Neues Testament. Regensburg: Pustet, 2009.
- Thompson, B. "Patristic use of the Sibylline Oracles." *RR* 6 (1952): 115-136.
- Trebilco, Paul R. *Jewish communities in Asia Minor*. SNTSMS 69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Uffenheimer, Binyamin. "Utopia and Reality in Biblical Thought." *Immanuel* 9 (1979): 1-15.

- Ulansey, David. *The Origins of the Mithraic mysteries: cosmology and salvation in the ancient world*. Oxford: University Press, 1989.
- Umemoto, Naoto. "Die Königsherrschaft Gottes bei Philon." Pages 207-256 in *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult*. Edited by Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer. WUNT 55. Tübingen, 1991.
- VanderKam, James C. *The Book of Jubilees*. Guides to apocrypha and pseudepigrapha 9. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Vossius, Isaac. *De Sibyllinis aliisque quae Christi natalem praecessere oraculis: Acced. eiusdem Responsio*. Oxford, 1680. Online: <http://books.google.de/books?id=djxAAAAAcAAJ>.
- Wacholder, B.Z. "Pseudo-Eupolemus' two Greek fragments on the Life of Abraham." *HUCA* 34 (1963): 83-113.
- Walbank, Frank William. "Alcaeus of Messene, Philip V, and Rome." *The Classical Quarterly* 36, no. 3/4 (October 1, 1942): 134-145. Online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/636623>.
- . *Polybius, Rome, and the Hellenistic world: essays and reflections*. Cambridge: University Press, 2002.
- Wander, Bernd. *Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten: Studien zum heidnischen Umfeld von Diasporasynagogen*. WUNT 104. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998.
- Waßmuth, Olaf. *Sibyllinische Orakel 1 - 2: Studien und Kommentar*. AJEC 76. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Watts, John D. W. *Isaiah 34 - 66*. WBC 25. Waco: Word Books, 1987.
- Weber, Reinhard. *Das Gesetz im hellenistischen Judentum: Studien zum Verständnis und zur Funktion der Thora von Demetrios bis Pseudo-Phokylides*. ARGU 10. Frankfurt: Lang, 2000.
- Weinstock, Stefan. *Divus Julius*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Wiesehöfer, Josef. "Ein König erschließt und imaginiert sein Imperium: Persische Reichsordnung und persische Reichsbilder zur Zeit Dareios I. (522–486 v. Chr.)." Pages 31-40 in *Wahrnehmung und Erfassung geographischer Räume in der Antike*. Edited by Michael Rathmann. Zabern: Mainz, 2007.
- . "The Medes and the Idea of the Succession of Empires in Antiquity." Pages 391-396 in *Continuity of Empire (?) Assyria, Media, Persia*. Edited by G. B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, and R. Rollinger. History of the Ancient Near East / Monographs. Padova: S.a.r.g.o.n. Editrice e Libreria, 2003.
- Wilson, John R. "Eris in Euripides." *GR* 26, no. 1. Second Series (April 1, 1979): 7-20.
- Williams, Margaret H., ed. *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: a diasporan sourcebook*. London: Duckworth, 1998.
- Winiarczyk, Marek. *Euhemeros von Messene: Leben, Werk und Nachwirkung*. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 157. München: Saur, 2002.
- Wischnowsky, M. *Tochter Zion. Aufnahme und Überwindung der Stadtklage in den Prophetenschriften des Alten Testaments*. WMANT 89. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2001.
- Witte, Markus. *Die biblische Urgeschichte*. Vol. 265. BZAW. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998.
- Wolff, Peter. *Die frühe nachösterliche Verkündigung des Reiches Gottes*. FRLANT 171. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999. Online: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn/resolver.pl?urn=urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00040114-6>.
- Yanko-Hombach, Valentina, ed. *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007.
- Yarbro Collins, Adela. "Numerical Symbolism in Jewish and Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature." Pages 57-89 in *Cosmology and eschatology in Jewish and Christian apocalypticism*. JSJSup 50. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Ziccardi, Costantino Antonio. *The relationship of Jesus and the kingdom of God according to Luke-Acts*. Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2008.
- Zimmermann, Christiane. *Die Namen des Vaters: Studien zu ausgewählten neutestamentlichen Gottesbezeichnungen vor ihrem frühjüdischen und paganen Sprachhorizont*. AJEC 69. Leiden: Brill, 2007.